

Mature Readers

plague

HEADPRESS 13

the journal of sex·religion·death

INSIDE

Pus Boils Sores · 2,000 years of Divine Entertainment

Jörg Buttgereit smashed by Warner Bros.

Cruising the Bay Area

Bondage Hippies

Mind Control

More!



Plague

headpress13

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Four bananas
make a bunch
and so do many
more.

editorial

The sparkling glucose drink. I've got a bottle of it before me and outside it's raining. I've contemplated stopping this editorial before it gets going and wandering off to 'surf the net' instead. But then, approximately seven days ago, in the same position, I thought just that and did just that, and here I am again... What is it with this internet malarkey? Unless I'm missing something, it's a substitute for the mail box and *something to do*. Sure, there's a nov-

(Continued on page 2)



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the journal of sex religion death

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love your neighbour. Grow flowers up your nostrils.

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(Editorial continued from page 1)

ely in seeing nude images materialise before your very
eyes, and coming up with 20,000 matches to the key word
you've entered in a search (three of which might be useful),
but doesn't anyone think that regulation in this instance
would be a good thing? I'm not talking about the being able
to access any area and freedom of speech arguments, I'm
talking about regulating the Net before we all turn into
'interactive' vegetables. Surfing idiots. Downloading pants
that blink. "Pleasure," a wise man once said, is "the in-
evitable by-product of our civilisation... The tragedy of your
times, my young friends, is that you may get exactly what
you want." As to those who think freedom is the operative
word, forget it — or rather, get it while you can.

Here is the new **Headpress**. Regular readers might notice a
difference. Why the change? Not altogether sure really, but
this feels like a natural next step; part of the 'plan'. Several
years of **Headpress** magazine, developing it and the ideas
behind it, have led us here, dear reader. Hopefully, as of
this issue, **Headpress** will prove a comfortable amalga-
mation of *looking* like it reads. Not that 'issue' is an altogether
appropriate term anymore: as per the ISBN number stamped
on the back cover, this here is a *book* and should be
available through high street bookstores (don't bank on it,
though). Groovier size, more pages, a real blast.

This issue is the first following the departure of **Headpress**
co-founder, Dave Slater. Give him a wave. We wish him well
and will undoubtedly see his name gracing these pages —
or Stockport's 'Most Wanted' — in some shape or form
again in the future. Mssrs Kerekes and Slater are still
currently at work on the 'video nasties' tome, **See No Evil:
A History of the Video Controversy**, so please keep your
'Father eats budgie after watching *Dumbo*'-type clippings
rolling in. Thanks to all those who have already con-
tributed, you will be duly credited in the fullness of time.

Okay, enough. Feedback is welcome. On with the show...

DAVID KEREKES

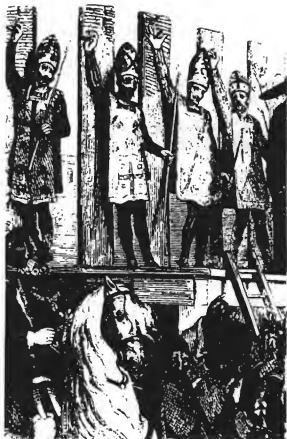
It's a gut-feeling thang...

On Plague, Perverts, Prelates & The State of One's Pecker

HOWARD LAKE

—Stagger in drunk, expectorating like lung-slurry, slump down on to sofa and thank yourself for the fact you don't own a gun, then TV on and that most immaculate of virus slithers along fibre-optic cables on to the retina like sluggish cocaine-addled super-8 cum-shot... Belgian kiddiefucking totkillers & king quarterpounder brain atrophy & toxic sludge spewing from the faucet & sublime Irish bigotry & Balkan atrocity thrill-kill & banal powers-that-be lunacy & soul-destroying day-by-day ennui & inane gameshow mentality & corporate skullfuck & junksick cocksucking 'starlet' & human excreta on the doorstep & organ-melt epidemic from the heart of darkness & diseased genitals laid waste & morons goin' places & genetic fuckups paraded for our entertainment & beauty scabbing over & ovaries distended with bad-bodied breeding & deathtrip psychos on the glory-prowl & talkshow savagery & need & desire & lust & hunger & sure+certtain knowledge we're truly living in the age of the damned, aaahhh — that's why we just had to get us Cable...

Strange how some folk fail to even see the plague a-coming... even stranger that the hypotheticals and possibilities rarely get an airing even in an age where channel-proliferation means we might still be the People Who Talked Themselves Into Extinction. Drunk, you can't get a handle on It — your paranoia says one thing; the grinning fluffy bunny on Nickelodeon says another. Sober, the fluffy bunny's even more frightening — the little fucker wants your blood and am I the only one who can see this? See, when what is obvious to *you* is utterly ignored by your TV set, you have to start wondering just what you can trust. Me, I trust my Panasonic 24" more than I trust my own knackers, but when it comes to talking plague, the bastard just doesn't wanna know, won't even contemplate a dialogue. You can't help but feel that's rather bizarre seeing how terrifying the living-shit out of me appears to be its favourite pastime, what with in-depth exclusives on everything from how a bunch of Uzbekhi yak-shaggers are flogging 10 kilotonne warheads to any psycho with the ackers to how some insane



housewife in Delaware has built a shrine to Mel Gibson, but on this question the tube stays mute. And if that's the case then it's clear to me I've finally gone clinical. Pass the Thorazine, Doc, and let's get happy...

Then again, maybe it's not so surprising that plague's keeping a low profile, that our preferred means of social control stays stumm on all the hundreds of new-fangled ways we can collectively buy the farm overnight — after all, the current civilised human is a species of creature raised from the very cunt on the comforter; the desire for safety our #1 urge, one that now outweighs all other considerations. Trivia such as justice, humanity and its destiny can all wait while society scrambles for safety. We want 'safe' sex, 'secure' accommodation, 'safe' streets, a world that's 'safe' for our mewling offspring. We want more, more than ever, to grab a hold of mommy's gargantuan tit for a soothing suckle of pseudo-lactate comfort. Stab the remote: tumble into the Talkshow vortex — **Rolonda, Sally Jessy Raphael, Geraldo, Jerry Springer, Oprah** — and see the desperate anxiety on the faces of the assembled masses; see them bay like bloodthirsty witch hunters for the necks of deviants and the diseased, for those who threaten their lazy consensoid notions of normalcy. Mention of sex without mention

of AIDS is now taboo; mention of family without touching on child abuse is verboten; discussion of drugs (like "Killer Love Drug E") that side-steps happy-family horrorshow is a no-no — even if the threat isn't present, a space must still be left at the table lest it show an invite, for how can we be safe unless we acknowledge the plethora of peril which daily surmount us all, besieging the homestead with corrupt poison and festering epidemic hideousness?

Everyone expects — *demands* — safety, but safety ebbs away as faggots+deviants+pushers+freaks+prophets+killers+alien races+scientific screw-ups keeps spreading pestilence and plague throughout the comfort zone. These fuckers want your children, your money, your lifestyle. They want to destroy all you hold sacred, for no other reason than because *it turns them on...* Welcome to "every parents' nightmare", etched into collective consciousness in 60pt tabloid shill — flailing in any and every direction, lashing out at anything and everything that bares even a hint that it might carry The Virus. Brand the bastards, tattoo the Sign of the Unclean upon their foreheads so they might be shunned by the Pure. And protect the innocent, natch protect the innocent... After all, as long as we've innocence then the future is secure, isn't it?...


It is at this point the idea of acquiring a smack habit takes on an appealing allure — something monastic about it (hence the term 'habit'), a means of insulating oneself from the horrors, a way of

keeping the mounting hysteria at bay while one meditates on how these times parallel times of plague past, how bizarre the juxtaposition of bright, shiny, sexy techno-salvation against the medieval ignorance, blind faith and suspicion. What our couch-bound global observer — somnambulant, lethargic, detached — sees is the return of the witch hunt, the resurgence of mob bigotry, the banding together of the terrified superstitious masses against an unseen, undefined threat. Holy mania is back, bigger and better than before, now with its own TV channel. Ranters and preachers hold us spellbound, pumping fear and intolerance, loathing and certain knowledge of the coming apocalypse — a hard-on for Jesus and his 2nd cumming when the deviants and humanists are cast into the Pit to burn for all eternity. Make no mistake: these babies want *vengeance* — no pussyfooting around with mercy+compassion here; happiness for this breed means the blood of sodomites, druggies, liberals and any other fucker so dumb they can't accept God into their hearts running into the gutters. As we all know, the Wrath of Revelation is selective; the Lord knows His own and He will save you. Much as medieval faith-freaks felched the festering sores of lepers in the belief their faith would make them immune so our contemporary Jesus-junkies maintain their righteousness protects them from the advancing pestilence. Gleefully, they scan the skies for auguries, proof-positive that their time is nigh. With delight bordering on the ecstatic they document decadence and decay, disease and death as incontrovertible evidence that all us non-believers are going to get fucked in the ass by the Big Man... *Schadenfreude* is one thing — the basic tenet of humour, after all — but what's so fascinating about this gang of creeps is the way in which they seem to get off on it: each HIV patient wasting away a cause for soothing satisfaction; every example of genocide proof the Devil walks among us. Remember, there may be rejoicing in heaven that a sinner repenteth, but God gets a boner every time a sinner buys the farm...

So, taking our cue from JC's Apocalypse Now! Brigade, it seems the Big Guy's mighty displeased with the way his creation's turned out — none of His fault, of course; you never blame the architect, only the builders — and thus intends to visit upon these miscreants all manner of plague in order that the ungodly and undeserving should perish and leave the world a virtuous and idyllic paradise. Verily, the meek shall inherit this earth — the definition of 'meek' here presumably stretched to encompass those who embrace divine retribution in the form of electrocution, lynching, selective euthanasia and so on and so on. After all, no one wants to put their faith in a *wimp* deity, do they? You gotta choose the God with the biggest balls, one whose wrath *means* something. Small wonder Christian Fundamentalists get uptight when looking upon the deranged works of islam — at least them crazy towelheads have a god what puts his ass on the line for his people. *Shit*, that Jesus ain't nuthin' but a pussy with all that talk of 'compassion' and 'mercy'. We got a *war* out there, and the sooner this here God of ours pulls on his fuck-you boots and starts kickin' the better!

Plague would be a start, and i'm sure there's plenty joy in the houses of the devout every time word gets out about the latest nascent virus on the rampage. Let's face it, AiDS hasn't turned out to be the pervert-killing cure-all it at first seemed; like, what's the point of Divine Retribution if all the damned gotta do to escape





righteous wrath is avoid shagging Haitian IV users in the ass? Sheesh! At least the Egyptians got the Exterminating Angel cruising downtown Calro onna infanticide rampage (real 'merciful & compassionate' that one, i always thought). Yep, HIV's been a real letdown for yer Bible-humpin' Jesus-felchers. Okay, so they got a shot of Liberace, Rock Hudson and a few thousand junkies, faggots an' nigras but... hardly brung 'em any closer to The Rapture, has it?

Thing is, when you examine the work of plague through history the one thing that always strikes you is its sheer mundanity. Sure, medieval woodcuts *look* good — Grim Reaper hacking a swathe through the boneyard — but, a few sad Goths and metalheads aside, it's strictly Hammer Horror schtik; something ugly to frighten the kiddies with... Plague rarely visits with such melodrama; it's progress is far more subtle, more creeping stalker than James Huberty-esque amok killer. Sure, viruses enjoy flexing their pecs from time to time — 'flesh-eating' necrosis here; Ebola Zaire there — enough to grab themselves a few column inches to announce their coming out, but once the panic's died down, i.e. in the time it takes DI to swing a cellulite thigh over another Hooray Henry's bell-end, our media-arbited society has forgotten the fucker, content to be assured that the matter's in hand, that no nasty virus is gonna pierce the precious cocoon of imagined security we've immuned ourselves within. Thinks virus: *I've give 'em fair warning...*

Ask any medico magus the score and the truth is far more alarming, far more justifying wholesale paranoia of the type only usually associated with chemicalised fuck-ups like your correspondent here. Not only are viruses multiplying daily, but they're getting better, stronger, fitter, new+improved. Right now, our old friend tuberculosis is on the horizon and riding back into town like the Bad Guy in some Clint Eastwood oater — *Thought you'd seen the last o' me, huh?* — and the townsfolk scramble for their antibiotic armoury, only to discover the powder got damp in the meanwhile and whereas a decade ago we had 10 different ways of wiping out this ornery critter, nowadays we only got the one, and that's looking decidedly rusty. S'right, our cures aren't what they used to be, and even the medico magi are shrugging their lab-coated shoulders and mumbling under their breath: *Umm, remember when we said we had a cure for all your ills? Well, you might wanna cover your ears for this one...*

Not until the medical establishment finally throws up its arms in defeat and heads for the hills are we going to realise the true extent of just how hardy yon viruses are. And that will be when the real panic hits — real plague conditions with all the manias and madmen, psychosis and savagery that entails. 'Cause if there's one god in which we all trust, it's medicine.

Medicine makes it all better, soothes the fevered and anxious brow of the populace. Our medicine convinces us we've got nature dicked, under the thrall. Medicine tells us we're all gonna live forever, that the offspring of our lazy loins will not crawl from the womb malformed, that we can indulge in whatever pleasure and poison we choose because, at the end of it all, when we've pushed it all too far, the great god Medicine will be there to mop up our spillage like a patient mommy

wiping a diarrhoeric baby's shitter. Just like me — I go through existence cramming all manner of shit into myself, absorbing carcinogens legal and otherwise, getting brutal on heart, lungs, kidneys and any other organ foolhardy enough to allow itself to stand in the crosshairs of my self-destruction and reassuring myself at every turn that one day a tall, dark and handsome surgeon will come along to put right everything I've fucked up... That is, if the PC police haven't seen to it that the likes of me don't get no cure — 'selective treatment', they call it; some would call it genocide or eugenics by other means, but not me — I mean, despite the fact the taxes paid on my drinking, smoking, etc. has swollen the nation's coffers by whatever, I'm well aware I've waived my right to be taken inside the Safety Corral by the beautiful, handsome gods of medicine. Doesn't mean I wouldn't seriously contemplate killing any quack who refused me treatment, tho'...

— **W**ould make an interesting scenario when the plague, in whatever form, ultimately hits and the medicos start laying out the infirm and deciding which are worthy of their care and which ain't. Some spectacular riots I can prophesy: scalpewielders swinging from the lampposts; the Mob moving in on the local Health Trust; biopsies conducted at gunpoint... Of course, that's assuming the medicos are still exerting any kind of power by then, for in the event of plague the first in line will be those very same sages in whom we have placed our trust these decades past — yep, Doctor Kildare, the people's flesh is rotting as they stand here and they want your *ass*, fucker!

Natch, society ain't going to throw its surgeons on the scrapheap just yet. There's too many items of faith at stake here; entire belief systems are dependant upon the high priests of medicine. Our trust in the mysteries and miracles of science are fast-becoming as established as any faith in religion. No society or civilisation can continually replace gods, incessantly swapping for another, only for each subsequent deity to be proved false. The bottom line is that eventually faith collapses completely — we lose faith in faith itself — and when that point is reached, societal control can no longer be imposed because no system of control can exist unless it can promise its subjects some form of protection.

When those viruses begin to make inroads and the bodycount starts mounting on the doctors' doorstep, that's when the panic will peak and breakdown will become inevitable. Right now, the skies are filled with omens and the TV shamens are interpreting same while trying to reassure the people there's nothing to fear but fear itself. The barricades are going up around the enclaves, bulwarks under construction against the dark forces massing on the perimeters — but you have to wonder about whether the concrete they're using is going to be up to the job.

And me? Today it feels like gallstones; a hideous pain in the pecker and abdomen at every piss. No blood yet, so it'll probably pass after a visit to the man. Sometimes, you instinctively know what kind of medicine's best for ya...

Yours, blessed by the surgeon general, touched by the hand of Geraldo Rivera...

LAKS

Screening Transgressive Desires:

David Cronenberg's **CRASH** and Bruce LaBruce's **HUSTLER WHITE** reviewed

JACK SARGEANT

Crash¹ — based on J.G. Ballard's novel — is a recognisable Cronenberg text, with its emphasis on contemporary technologies, sexualities and eroticism, yet the film also explicitly articulates (via an explanatory speech made by the character Vaughn) a denial of erotic interest in the post-human hard-bodies of 'cyber-sex' which were constructed in/through previous Cronenberg films² and for many was their central theme.

In place of these post-modern bodies, **Crash** fetishises the eroticism of speed, soft bodies (bruises, scars, and injuries are shot as images of the 'erotic' rather than 'horrific'), and the glamour of stardom (James Dean, Jayne Mansfield and J.F. Kennedy). This fetishism is best illustrated by the structure of the film, which is almost episodic, replacing the downward narrative spirals of most Cronenberg texts, which, despite their 'bleakness' retain a clearly recognisable linear structure. **Crash** follows a group of crash fetishists through the eyes of the protagonist Ballard as they fuck and suck, watch accidents, re-stage the 'classics' (such as Dean's auto-wreck), fantasise and crash.

The thin narrative (boy and girl need bigger thrills) becomes merely a frame on which to hang 'transgressive' fetishistic scenes. Key to these scenes is a lengthy sequence in which Ballard and his girlfriend/wife, Catherine, fuck: as he penetrates her from behind she twists her head around to look at him (a rarity in mainstream movies, in which women normally have their eyes closed in missionary-position-delight) and asks him to describe Vaughn's car, at one point asking "does it smell like sperm?" and "would you like to fuck Vaughn?" Other scenes include amputee sex ('unfortunately' for amputee fetishists the actress is 'wearing' 'artificial' limbs), sex in car wrecks, sex immediately after being thrown from a car wreck, sex over the wing of a plane, violent (yet strangely almost silent) sex in the back of a car, gay sex, hospital sex, etc.



Yet, entertaining as **Crash** is, Cronenberg's direction retains its 'ambiguous' coldness³. While such a coldness works well in his previous post-modern 'horror' or 'science fiction' texts (especially so in **Shivers** and **Videodrome**) here it becomes an irritation, as if Cronenberg was attempting to maintain a distance between the charged eroticism that the film portrays and his own, despite the fact that drag racing and speed formed the central theme for his earlier film, **Fast Company**.

Hustler White is Bruce LaBruce's third feature film, although as part of the 'homocore' J.D. Collective in Canada he produced a series of Super-8 shorts. Against the ambiguity of Cronenberg's position in relation to the fetishism of **Crash**, LaBruce would probably identify himself as a 'Queer punk'⁴ (the soundtrack to his first feature film, **No Skin Off My Ass**, included Beefeater's anthemic 'Fred's Song (Slamdancing)', featuring the immortal lyric "Skinhead guys just turn me on"). **Hustler White** follows the lives of Hollywood hustlers over a two month period, presenting a series of scenes of various hustlers within a simple narrative concerning Jurgan Anger ("any relation to Kenneth?" he is repeatedly asked. "No," he always spits back), who is researching a book on gay Hollywood, and his attempt to hunt down the hustler Monte Ward. Against this backdrop — told in flashback over Ward's body floating in a pool (complete with Coll soundtrack) — the film depicts a series of sexual events: auto-asphyxiation as a method of getting attention, S&M torture, a black-on-white gang bang, a scary morgue attendant (played by performer Ron Athey) with a fetish for *serious* bondage, and the film's 'transgressive' high point: an amputee fucking a client with his condom-covered leg-stump.

Hustler White is an underground film, and identifies itself as such with its emphasis on LaBruce as auteur (besides writing and directing, he also 'stars' as Anger) and its emphasis on appealing to a small audience (normally slackers, punks and gays). La Bruce rejects the purely fetishistic potential of his films (unlike Warhol, for whom the figure of 'hustler' Paul America in **My Hustler** was the central 'visual pleasure' of the film), instead he parodies sexualities and desires, as well as his own role as a filmmaker. For example, in one key sequence Anger is watching two guys fuck on the set of a porn film, narrating the action into his Dictaphone he spots Ward, who is working as a fluffer⁵, on the other side of the set. Anger is so excited he runs across the room, tripping over a wire on the way, and sending the entire set, including the copulating couple, crashing to the floor. Yet, **Hustler White** never slides into pure parody, and various aspects of the film are dealt with compassionately (for example, the relationships between the hustlers).

What is interesting about both **Crash** and **Hustler White** is that they have so much in common in the presentation of fantasy and desire, and both deal with presenting images of — at least in terms of sexualities dealt with in mainstream cinema — 'shocking' sex (noticeably their shared images of amputee sex), both are made by acclaimed 'auteurs'. However, whereas LaBruce clearly engages with his film, Cronenberg seems to have taken a step back from his; while LaBruce wants to have fun with his film, and play with his audience, Cronenberg seems willing to watch from a distance. He does not judge but neither does he appear to enjoy, and, ultimately, who wants to watch a fetishistic sex movie which denies its own complicity? ■

NOTES

1. **Crash** has not, yet, been banned in England. Nevertheless, at the time of this writing, no distributor in Britain has risked investing in a film which the BBFC will potentially cut to shreds. In order to see the film I travelled to France, where the cineastes have neither edited nor dubbed the movie (it is subtitled).

2. See: **Rabid**, and **Videodrome**, with their images of a becoming 'Other' (male and female, respectively) as the results of technology; **Shivers**, with the 'benevolent' scientifically created parasite as primal aphrodisiac; the themes of schizophrenic identity and mutant gynaecology of **Dead Ringers**.

3. Cronenberg's unwillingness to 'comment' directly has led to his condemnation by the Marcusean psychoanalytical critic Robin Wood, who suggested that Cronenberg's early work was politically reactionary. While this is a misreading of Cronenberg, it nevertheless illustrates that his ambiguity has not always worked in his favour.

4. LaBruce was certainly willing to appear in the 'homocore' special issue of Californian Punk 'zine **Maximum RockRoll**.

5. The fluffer's role is to make sure the actors in the film maintain an erection. Ward is seen sitting at the back of the film set, in his thong, reading, until summoned by the director to indulge in a little 'wrist' work.

Thanks to Robing Dickinson and Mike Sippings for their assistance in supplying information on Bruce LaBruce.



Literary Punishment

Three Reviews

C.J. TURNER

If Betty Page was (and maybe still is) the Queen of Bondage, John Willie could well be the King. The magazine he produced sporadically between 1948 and 1959, called **Bizarre**, was almost certainly at that time a fad. Today it is responsible for a whole industry — be it book, magazine or video — that deals with sado-masochism. The German publisher Taschen has beautifully reprinted these magazines in what I think is their original, or near-original, size and issued them as a two volume set. Volume one with **Bizarre** magazines numbers 1 through to 13, and volume two with numbers 14 to 26 (the final issue). All in all it comes to about 1,600-plus pages.

I suspect that a lot of **Headpress** readers will know something about John Willie (aka John Alexander Scott Coutts). For those who don't, very briefly, he was born into the very powerful and successful English Coutts banking firm, spent his early life in England and was then apparently 'banished' to Australia. There he married (his wife, Holly, was his first model) and discovered bondage art by French artists such as Carlo (a pseudonym). He moved to the USA in the 1940s and as well as producing **Bizarre**, sold numerous photographs and cartoon artwork, all of which, as you might expect, depicted damsels in distress. He died in 1962 of a brain tumour and is buried in, of all places, Guernsey, in the British Channel Islands. His output of erotica was prodigious. **Bizarre** magazine, I suppose, forms the 'meat and potatoes' of this work.

Probably few people, when they buy these two volumes, will read them cover to cover. Most will probably dip into them (and wank themselves stupid over the pictures of tied-up women!) at random. What they will find is a cornucopia of sexual practices: rubberwear, tight lacing, leg worship, high heels, stockings, corsets, cross-dressing, tattoos, nose-rings, spanking, domination, and of course, bondage. Quite a large part of the magazine consists of articles by Willie and readers' letters. The articles themselves are often about the supposed adventures of Willie ('The Indian Rope-Trick', 'The Rope-Trick of the Rhine') or the adventures of a correspondent ('Now She's in the Movies') or of a historical nature ('Footwear Fantasia', 'History of a Corset'). I suspect that quite a few of them were written by Willie himself and a large number of them describe various methods of keeping a nagging wife quiet.

Throughout **Bizarre** there are plenty of examples of Willie's photographs and drawings. It's the drawings that catch the eye most. They are quite beautiful and delicate, depicting women in all manner of fetishtic attire and predicaments. His first forays into this area took the form of the now rare cartoon (not a very good word to describe something so sophisticated) series 'Sweet Gwendoline', which were largely published independently to **Bizarre**. This buxom beauty, forever being pursued by Sir Dystic D'Arcy and being rescued by the pneumatic female secret agent V69 (!), does make a few appearances in these magazines, but is limited to a half-dozen pages or so. The good news is that **The Adventures of Sweet Gwendoline** are to be republished soon by Beller Press.

The photography is also eye-catching, in fact probably brilliant. Some of it is done in the open air, some of it in his studios and there is a sprinkling of Readers Wives and a few stills from films (apparently taken via concealed camera from the front row). There are also a few bondage photos. I wonder how many people originally bought **Bizarre** just for the bondage photos? The beautiful models (including the tragically murdered Judy Ann Dull) are quite genuinely tightly tied up and gagged. The photos remind me of the bondage magazines published by House of Milan: constricting, figure-redefining, skin-stretching trussings — they are *not* of the gentler Harmony kind. [See below.] The models really do appear as if they are about to undergo some dreadful ordeal and you can only wonder at the impact these photos had in the 1940s and Fifties. In fact, you wonder about the impact of the entire magazine in those early days. It had been noticed by officialdom before Judy Ann Dull's murder, but it seems it was Irving Klaw who got hauled before authorities to be questioned.

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John Willie died on August 5th in Guernsey. Many people I know would turn their noses up at his life's work, and scoff and call it pornography. I always find this sort of attitude disturbing. It's a way of looking at life that drains it of any colour, excitement or emotion. Indeed, I often think it drains it of lust.

John Willie, I feel, raises two fingers to society. He had a way of looking at the world that whilst not perhaps unique, was wholly original. It's plain to me from these two volumes that he adored women and probably regarded them as superior to man, and he expressed this in art, drawings and photographs of near-genius. He was amazed by the way a bound woman seemed to become more feminine and powerful, and at the many subtle ways in which they held the reins. I wonder if he found men dull by comparison?

But the most interesting story here is unwritten. It is the story of a young man's alienation from his family, a very powerful and successful British Merchant Banking company, Coutts & Co. What did he do to make them (apparently) send him to Australia? What did he think of them? I suppose it's logical to assume that they sent him to a public school — which one I wonder? Was he brutalised there and was he further brutalised during his service in the merchant navy in Australia? Was **Bizarre** a way of getting back at the world? And I wonder how many of his family and relatives attended his funeral in Guernsey?

The two volumes of **Bizarre** should be available fairly easily in larger book stores. My copies cost £20 the pair in hardback. For a more detailed look at John Willie's art, particularly the astonishing photographs, try the two volumes in the Glittering Images range — **The Art of John Willie (Sophisticated Bondage)**. These are expensive. Mine cost £35 for each volume a few years ago, but you won't regret the outlay.

BONDAGE LIFE

My Concise Oxford Dictionary (1982 edition — I'm so up to date) defines bondage as 'serfdom, slavery; subjection to constraint'. I call it the erotic art of tying someone up. If that's your definition too, then the 'bees knees' of bondage magazines must surely be **Bondage Life**, a sensual hand grenade of a magazine published quarterly by Harmony Communications. It covers the bondage scene in America and, to a lesser extent, in Europe. It is packed full of photos and art, both professional and amateur, letters, articles, even poetry! In particular there is a fascinating column on bondage scenes in films and on television. The models are utterly gorgeous and it's the sort of magazine that stuns you for a full half-hour when finally you get your hands on a copy.

It's beautifully produced and printed. Most of the girls could grace the pages of **Playboy** — in fact, many are better looking! It's also nothing if not comprehensive. There is a regular column called 'Bound For Controversy — Because Men Like To Be Tied Up Too', which features photos of trussed up men. Presumably it's an attempt to show that the magazine is not about the subjugation of women and that it is, in fact, female friendly. I suppose it helps. (The editor of **Bondage Life** is one Kristine Imboch).

My own favourite column is 'Bound For Hollywood', an extraordinary four-pages of stills from films and television programmes, both old and new, that show tied-up women. It's amazing what they unearth. Shots (taken from re-runs on cable television) of **The Girl**

bond
age
life

From **Uncle** (remember Stephanie Powers as secret agent April Dancer — wow!) and **The Avengers**, which features my all-time favourite bondage shot — Honor Blackman in the episode titled 'Intercrime', with a near-impossibly tight gag between her lips, and many others. Modern films, of course, also produce a staple diet of bondage shots and prove, if nothing else, that most films are directed by men. Funnily enough, I've never actually seen the eye-popping bondage shots in the first few minutes of the film, **The Howling**. Does anyone out there in **Headpress**-world know who the actress — stripped, gagged and spread-eagled on a bed — is? I'd love to know.

There's a sense of humour running through the magazine, too. The models' supposed names are quite funny (i.e. Chelsea Pfeiffer, Whitney Prescott) and the whole thing is quite good natured. There are no photos of men dominating women, for example, and no photos of violence of any kind. A lot of the art is good, in particular perhaps, that of Brian Tarsis, whose work is quite beautiful.

If you've seen the magazine, or indeed any of the Harmony bondage mags, you might wonder — like I do — why the authorities frown on them, whereas utter crap — with a few exceptions, admittedly — is allowed to populate the top shelves of newsagents. Britain's adult magazines are either produced by David Sullivan or Paul Raymond. Thus they all look the same. Neither of the two men has a genuine sense of the erotic, appearing instead to be dirty old men with jaded minds. I remember looking through a copy of **Mayfair** a few years ago — a short while after Paul Raymond had taken it over and pushed it relentlessly downmarket — and feeling embarrassed to

be looking through it. Its humour was coarse and the photographs and copy looked as though they'd been produced in all of 10 minutes. Moreover, it gave off the impression of actually disliking women, whereas the supposed 'hardcore' bondage magazines of Harmony genuinely seem to revere them. It just goes to show how twisted we are in this country with regard our attitudes to sexual publications.

I do admit though that the letters pages in **Bondage Life** are very reassuring. Lots of the 'until I discovered your magazine I thought I was the only one who etc etc etc...' Christ! I know how they feel!

PS English readers should be able to get copies of reproduced Harmony mags for around £10 each (I think) in sex shops.

PPS Speaking of bondage on TV, a few days ago I caught the last few seconds of Anna Walker in the ITV holiday show **Wish You Were Here?** in which she was tied up, for some reason, as a cowgirl. Was the camera crew playing a trick on her? I'll never know — Shit! 1996 is ruined for me.

THE ART OF JOHN WILLIE SOPHISTICATED BONDAGE



1946-1961

ESTHETIQUE
FETISH & BIZARRE

THY ROD AND STAFF

One of my hobbies is collecting prostitutes' calling cards from London phone booths. This makes me

1. Feel a complete prat.
2. Slightly worried that someone I know might see me doing this ("Chris, it's you! What are you...?")
3. Wish I had the job of putting the cards in the boxes. I gather it's well paid.
4. Amazed at the amount of action that seems to be going on behind closed doors.
5. Amazed at the *variety* of action that seems to be going on behind closed doors (with a large proportion of it appearing to involve some sort of flagellation).

thy rod and thy staff

This leads me — in a very roundabout way — to a bookshop in London, where I found a copy of **Thy Rod and Staff** on the shelves [Published by Little Brown at £20].

Why would anybody want to be hit with a whip, cane, paddle or any one of a wide range of weapons? Author Edward Anthony tries to explain flagellation in the context of history and society. Mine, and I suspect many other men's idea of flagellation, is a gorgeous busty blonde in thigh length black boots and black leather Basque with a twinkle in her eye and an expert hand with a whip; and this is an image — or a caricature of it — used frequently on prostitute's calling cards. But the real story is much more complicated. Flagellation has its roots in religious ceremonies and these grew and infested society via public schools and the punishment of criminals. Today it is dying out slowly. Particularly as a result of the banning of corporal punishment in British schools from 1987. In fact, it's really a story of the need to keep control over people, to keep them in line and in order, so that society can 'survive'. Edward Anthony does a masterly job in examining this and drawing careful conclusions from his research. He ultimately concludes that flagellation is really just another human expression and, because of human nature, one that is impossible to completely eradicate. He says:

Flagellants... smack each others bottoms. This is all they really do, albeit in a variety of ways and that it can be a loving experience depending on the sophistication of the spanking scenario being enacted.

He suggests that England is a strongly sadomasochistic society, with tabloid newspapers hunting out anyone who does anything slightly 'naughty'. I read recently that Field Marshall Haig's school days at Eton made him — because of the cruelty he endured — careless (to put it mildly) of the troops under his command. Several million men died horribly in the mud in the First World War probably because of this mistreatment. Even today, however, there is a Douglas Haig society who think that the old fucker really did a great job. And I wonder how many of the soldiers were encouraged to commit suicide in the trenches by their local clergy who told them that God was on their side?... ■

Beautiful Black Mistress

gives a spanking
good time
Naughty boys report
now



visits arranged



VOLUPTUOUS BUSTY BLONDE

WILL UNLEASH YOUR FANTASIES
ALL SERVICES PROVIDED



PUS, BOILS & SORES

bubonic **PLAGUE AS** divine **ENTERTAINMENT**

DAVID KERESKES

In the film adaptation of Albert Camus' novel, **The Plague**, the setting is still the fictitious sea-port of Oran, but the time-zone and geographical location of that port have been switched. No longer on the Algerian coast in the 1940s, Oran is now situated somewhere in South America and the year is 1990-something (that's as clear as it gets). But the film doesn't really necessitate these changes. The time-period is irrelevant — Oran looks dated and dilapidated, anyway — and most of the inhabitants speak French (with subtitles). Not very *South American*. Director Luis Puenzo's reworking isn't bad, however, and there are several very good moments in the film. The plague is not the real focus of Camus' book and less so in the adaptation of it. Rather, the crux is how people might *adjust* given that their lives are subject to impending sudden death. But with the constraints of the medium, Puenzo can only accommodate a part of Camus' philosophising. Theologians battle it out with scientists, and there are a number of existential brain-teasers, but the plot has to out in the end. When martial law in Oran is imposed, and exit from the city via official channels is impossible, Cottard — a bad guy — determines: "I'm not interested in getting out... because here nobody's guilty any more. These guys are equal to me now. They think with their dicks — but pray the plague will get the next guy."

We can stop the Camus-inspired deliberations right there, for there is one moment in the film that manages to encapsulate in a single swipe everything that Camus sets out to say on the human-condition. It doesn't come with a fanfare, and it doesn't really get much of a look-in. It might even be a 'joke'.

Many hundreds of people are already dead and dying, but life continues on a relatively normal plane in the quarantined city. Bars are still open, restaurants still serve food (albeit with each meal wrapped in cling-film), and



A PLAGUE MISCELLANY

"Plague is not the most modern way to die," suggests the doctor in Camus' **The Plague**, but it's still around and a great source for novelists and filmmakers. Should you wish to pursue the plague *oeuvre* further, here are some pointers...

□ The 11th Plague

[Novel; L.T. Peters] Ahmed Machdi, the most distinguished bacteriologist in the Arab world, is forced by his government to create a biological weapon. The intention is to immobilise the United States and allow the Arab people to take care of the 'real enemy': the Jews. The bacteria kills within two to three hours and it is estimated that everyone in the US will be dead within the year. A group of scientists gather to try and work out an antidote, but a more pressing schedule is introduced when the president of the US notifies the 18 nations that unless somebody 'owns up', nuclear arms will be deployed against all of them. A pointless subplot and an ending which threatens to start the whole sorry story off once again, makes this a routine thriller.

□ 2002: The Rape of Eden

[Film; Sam Auster, 1992] A virus which scientists determine isn't contagious, leads to the extinction of most all the human race. In this future world, the most valuable asset are female virgins, located and sold by bounty hunters to flesh merchants. Dialogue includes lines like, "C'mon, give peace a chance" and "You look like shit, reverend."

□ The Andromeda Strain

people still go to work. Apart from the curfew and the occasional bold red 'X' on the door of a plague-infected family, Oran appears on the surface pretty much like any other city. On closer inspection it's ravaged. Not in a physical disease sense (there isn't much of that in the movie anyway), but more a gnawing contamination of the mind. Nerves are understandably shot, as in the sequence where a young woman in a bar has a panic attack, is certain she has the plague, and gropes frantically beneath her dress for telltale lumps around her breasts, her armpits and groin. Yet, even that may be considered a relatively normal reaction given the circumstances. The sequence which *really* offers an insight into how the disease has mutated the mind occurs in a nude-dancing club. As the clientele chat over beers, up on the stage a woman performs. Where once she might have had a snake to supplement her act — entwining it around her person; caressing it — now she has a *rat*. The most feared thing in this plague-ridden world; the carrier of the fleas that carry the deadly plague bacteria itself — the rat. She allows the rodent to clamber along her outstretched arm, up to her mouth, even kisses it. Before the brief sequence cuts away, we see that the dancer is surrounded by the creatures, the whole stage area swarming with the things. And the nude-dancer herself — she's not even dancing as such; just sitting there. That's mankind for you: thinking with the collective dick. Society will shape-shift to accommodate sex in times of crisis.

The breakdown of law and order is not a major pursuit in Camus' novel nor Puenzo's adaptation. If it was, Oran would probably become **Lord Of The Flies** for grown-ups. And if, at this point, we were to introduce New York into the equation and apply Graham Masterton's name to it, then **Lord Of The Flies** would be a pretty safe bet.

Graham Masterton's book — **Plague** — is the visceral flipside of pestilence in modern times. It is everything that Camus thought to leave out. For Camus, the plague rears its head when it does for no reason in particular — just Nature doing its thing; for Masterton, radiation is the key. Radiation — as in giant ants and incredible shrinking people — has created a mutated strain of bubonic plague, 'more virulent and faster-growing.' The plague surfaces first in Miami, where the beach-waters have become badly polluted. Soon, the National Guard are called in to shoot to kill anyone attempting to leave. But the plague gets out, and it's in New York that the latter part of the book concentrates, with all the major characters — half a billion petty grievances between them — falling together for a stand-off against the sick.

It's fair to say that while Masterton's plague tragedy — full of gristle and a dashing of sex¹ — is a routine thriller, it is not without its moments. Standout images include plague-infected doctors trying to administer drugs to plague-infected patients; a taxi-cab driver who charges \$40 for a \$2 fare; and an elevator ride that ends with the line 'the elevator doors slid open, and he was back in hell'. But the *truly* great thing about Graham Masterton's **Plague** is that the antidote, the world-saving solution to the plague that Dr Leonard Petrie has spent most the entire book trying to deliver to Washington, is... *wrong!* it doesn't work! Petrie, driving through now-barren cityscapes, believing himself immune and only hours from the capitol, has to pull over. His vision is becoming blurred and the telltale pains deep in his bowels have started: he has the plague. The end.²





With their revolting loads, the dead carts would back to the edge of the pits and there in the eerie glow of dark lanterns the bodies would be shot down into the waiting gulf.

Saint Sebastian is a patron of plague — he so favoured by Renaissance painters, shot by archers for being a Christian and left for dead. Another saint, St Christopher, patron of travellers, is also called in times of plague (as he is with any contagious disease and swift infection). It is said that he was condemned to be "through-shotten with arrows", but, when the archers fired upon him, the arrows didn't strike and merely hung in the air. St Edmund, King of East Anglia, is another saint associated with plague, shot by the Danes in 870 AD till his body was 'like a thistle covered in prickles'. Indeed, any martyr who has met with death or near death at the tip of an arrow is deemed to have powers against pestilence. It's a tradition that dates back to pagan times when plague was thought of as being invisible arrows shot by the gods. In the *Iliad*, Homer refers to 'Apollo's arrows spreading disease.' In early German paintings Christ is sometimes seen as loosing arrows of pestilence and war against sinners.³

But it's not an address you'll find in many Christian works of reference nowadays. Plague saint — might not a Church that recog-

[Novel; Michael Crichton/Film; Robert Wise, 1971]. Satellite from outer space brings back alien bacteria (sounds like **Night of the Living Dead**) which turns blood to powder, and thwarts attempts at analysis by regularly mutating. With it being space-borne, it can also live in a vacuum. A classic example of Seventies' bio-techno-paranoia cinema — a sub-genre which includes **The China Syndrome** and **Phase IV**. It's sterility and stickler for technical-laden procedure is engrossing but wouldn't get Hollywood backing today.

□ **Bible**

Among the Good Book's other oblique references to almost anything are the Ten Plagues: (i) Nile turned to Blood, (ii) Frogs, (iii) Lice, (iv) Flies, (v) Murrain, (vi) Boils, (vii) Hall, (viii) Locusts, (ix) Darkness, (x) First-born. The third and fourth, both Insect plagues, might be one and the same. So, too, five and six. Is it worth mentioning **The Abominable Dr Phibes** [d: Robert Fuest, 1971]...?

□ **Black Death**

[Film; Sheldon Larry, 1992] A tolerable made-for-TV production which pits Kate Jackson against city corruption and bubonic plague in latter-day New York. "Does it have anything to do with AIDS?" asks a reporter on finding that the city hospital is in quarantine. Unfortunately degenerates into a regular chase-thriller by the end.

□ **The Carrier**

[Novel; Martin Booth] Horror yarn about a racist bigot lorry driver, infected with rabies whilst on the continent and now spreading the disease in good old blighty. Unreadable in my youth and, having recently 'rediscovered' **The Carrier** in a sale of library books, unreadable now. Only more so.

□ **The Cassandra Crossing**

[Film; George Pan Cosmatos, 1977] Bubonic plague is isolated on a fast-moving passenger train. All-star cast has Burt Lancaster as the chief who has no intention of there being any survivors.

□ **The Crazies**

[Film; George Romero, 1973] A military accident leads to a

germ warfare agent being deposited in a small American town. Effective and worrying. A similar story has **Deadline** [d: Stellan Olsson, 1977].

□ **Deadly Virus**

[Film; 1997] French, possibly about AIDS. No further info.

□ **The Decameron**

[Novel; Giovanni Boccaccio] The Black Death, which was ravishing Italy at the time of his writing, provides Boccaccio's collection of bawdy tales with a curiously sombre backdrop. It might not be of any interest, but Pasolini's adaptation of stories from the book — **The Decameron** [1970] — has no such framing device.

□ **Desperate Living**

[Film; John Waters, 1977] Mary Vivian Pierce is injected with rabid bat pus.

□ **Flesh + Blood**

[Film; Paul Verhoeven, 1985] St Martin, point the way to the main text.

□ **The Fungus**

[Novel; Harry Adam Knight] Must we? A flesh-eating mushroom epidemic?

□ **Die Hamburger Kankheit**

[Film; Peter Fleischmann, 1979] Has a soundtrack by Jean-Michel Jarre. Other than a bunch of production credits and an aka — **La Maladie de Hambourg** — no other information is available.

□ **The Hot Zone**

[Richard Preston] Having decided to exclude all works of non-fiction from this listing, I feel no compromise whatsoever including this, 'the most terrifying true story you will ever read'. I don't for a moment doubt the facts that supposedly sit at the core of the book, just that Preston manages to make the tale of Ebola in the USA read like a scientific Jackie Collins.

The Hot Zone encouraged a host of factual plague books and documentaries — **The Plague Fighters** [d: Ric Esther Bienstock, 1996] for one.

□ **I Drink Your Blood**

[Film; David Durston, 1970] A bunch of hippies go on a small-town murder-spree when their meat pies are injected with rabies. Durston had syphilis, a contagion of a different kind, at the nub of his rarely seen follow-up, **Stigma**.

nises such a thing appear archaic and out of touch with the real world? Certainly plague in the Twentieth Century isn't all that alien a prospect but no one is calling on St Sebastian to sort it out. That's *Black Death* territory. Middle Ages. And the Church isn't particularly fond of Middle Ages because it was then that confidence in the institutional church was lowest.

The flagellation movement has its origins in Eleventh Century Europe, when Franciscans began to administer self-floggings as a penance. By the Twelfth Century, St Dominic had established an hierarchy of flagellation — 1,000 lashes being the equivalent of reciting 10 penitential psalms. But the practice was never recognised in France and outlawed outright in Poland. In North Italy, however, in 1259, groups of people, headed by priests carrying crosses, flew against general consensus and started to undertake self-flogging processions. Marching double file, day and night, people from all classes and ages joined in. The movement was at its strongest whenever the fears of the populace were roused — as in times of earthquake or in plague. No surprise then that when the Black Death struck in earnest in 1348, much of Europe saw rise to flagellants. People believing that the plague was God's will and that only the repentant would be saved, undertook pilgrimages of 33 days duration — recalling Christ's 33 years of life — moving from town to town, scourging themselves. Soon, the movement began to see themselves as a stand-alone organisation, removed from the church, and adopted the title Brethren of the Cross. Children as young as five joined in and a procession could number up to a thousand strong. They didn't change their clothes, nor did they bathe, fornicate, or talk. Having arrived in a town, the Brethren would babble and wail psalms, while flogging themselves in atonement for their sins. Three-times a day, every day, with metal-tipped whips. And those who appeared to be going easy were thrashed again by a lay master. In each town, the Brethren sought the shrine of the most powerful saint, hoping to procure his help.

The Church, alarmed at this new sect, condemned the flagellants as devilish and a Bull was issued against them. Despite initially being welcomed by townsfolk as 'holy people', when the Black Death showed no sign of abating, public opinion turned against the Brethren of the Cross. It became increasingly common for pilgrims to be refused entry at town gates. Now they were viewed as crackpots. Furthermore, because the flagellants did not discriminate between infected and 'clean' towns, they themselves often carried and spread





the Black Death. The Brethren were driven underground and, as a mass popular movement, eventually destroyed altogether. (After disabling this particular heresy, Inquisitors would continue to look for things to stamp out. Next stop: witchcraft and burning at the stake.)

In **The Plague**, Camus has an old priest delivering a sermon on how the people of Oran *deserve* the epidemic. Later on, however, having witnessed the protracted suffering of an innocent child (he sang in the choir), the priest is caught in a theological knot and ultimately throws himself into the dead pit.

In **A Journal of the Plague Year** [1665], Daniel Defoe describes one scene in which a woman is raped and killed in broad daylight:

A poor unhappy Gentlewoman, a substantial Citizen's Wife was (if the Story be true) murder'd by one of these Creatures in Aldersgate-street, or that way: He was going along the Street, raving mad to be sure, and singing, the people only said he was drunk; but he himself said, he had the plague upon him, which, it seems, was true; and meeting the Gentlewoman, he would kiss her; she was terribly frightened...

Defoe determines such activity to be a 'Corruption of humane Nature' brought on by the plague. Thucydides, the Athenian historian, ruminated some 400 years BC, that man indulged in acts of violence and lawlessness during times of plague because they believed there was no severer punishment. The plague was *it*. 'Fear of gods or law of man,' he wrote, 'there was none to restrain them... a far severer sentence had been already passed upon them all and hung ever over their heads.' Why pray? Clergy were dying like

□ **Isle of the Dead**

[Film; Mark Robson, 1945] Boris Karloff plays a General quarantined on a small Greek island during a time of war and plague. "People get weak and dizzy and fall down" decides an old peasant woman, full of old plague superstitions.

□ **A Journal of the Plague Year**

[Novel; Daniel Defoe] Here's the opposite end of the **Hot Zone** non-fiction stick. Defoe wrote his plague book as a work of fiction, though it is evidently steeped in fact and observation.

□ **The Last Man**

[Novel; Mary Shelley] Described in Peter Nicholls' **Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction** as 'gloomy'. Beyond that I know nothing of Mary Shelley's book. But plague does feature highly in sci fi. John S. Marr has a novel called **The Black Death**, and a movie in production, **Bullet-proof**, is purportedly about a pharmaceutical company infecting people with an alien virus.

□ **The Mad Death**

[TV] Based on the novel by Nigel Slater, this three-part mini-series (released in the US as a movie?) centres upon the possibilities of a rabies epidemic in Britain. Last episode has rabid dogs being hunted by army and police marksmen, and includes graphic scenes which would give any self-respecting animal lover nightmares for a week. (Heads of doggies exploding when shot, for example.)

□ **The Masque of the Red Death** [Film; Roger Corman, 1964] While the 'Red Death' decimates the countryside, the sadistic Prince Prospero retires to his castle for debauchery and feasting. The 1940 serial **Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe** has a 'Purple Death'.

□ **Monty Python and the Holy Grail**

[Film; Terry Gilliam, 1975] Gilliam has a soft spot for pestilence. It features in several of his films and takes pride of place in his latest, **Twelve Monkeys** [1996]. In the **Holy Grail**, a family attempt to off-load their not-quite-dead granddad onto the dead cart.

□ **The Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey** [Film; Vincent Ward, 1988] As with many features to

emerge from Australia and New Zealand, **The Navigator** (New Zealand) scores highly on the eminently weird scale. Set in Medieval Europe, a young psychic attempts to save his village from impending plague by tunnelling through the earth and coming out in the future. Sometimes inspired.

□ **The Nightmare Factor**

[Novel; Thomas N. Scortia and Frank M. Robinson] More germ warfare shenanigans with political double-dealings as a new disease threatens to wipe out mankind. From the guys who brought us **The Glass Inferno**.

□ **Noferatu the Vampyr**

[Film; Werner Herzog, 1979]

Klaus Kinski as the count in big heels. His arrival in town is preceded by plague rats.

□ **Outbreak**

[Film; Wolfgang Peterson, 1995]

A new virus is discovered and yet another small American town faces annihilation. As can be expected, the big budget ensures less of the germs and more of the 'human interest'. Dustin Hoffman method acts himself into a hole with the strictly by-the-script supporting cast. (I might have missed something, but do the credits fail to acknowledge **The Hot Zone**, on which this movie would appear to be based?)

□ **Outbreak**

[Novel; Robin Cook] Master of medical mayhem, Cook gets round to the virus.

□ **Panic in the Streets**

[Film; Elia Kazan, 1950] Gang of mobsters — one of whom has pneumonic plague — on the run.

everybody else. The monastic chronicler, Birchington of Canterbury, noted that in the Sixteenth Century, 'chaplains were kept alive to the very end of the pestilence in order to bury the dead.' Quite what is meant by 'kept alive' I am not sure.

The Black Death⁴ — so called because dried blood under the skin turns black. Though essentially a combination of several plague strains, the most common form of plague during the Black Death epidemic was bubonic, caused by the bacillus *Yersinia pestis*. It breeds in the digestive tract of fleas, and the fleas in turn are carried by rats and other wild rodents. The most efficient carrier of plague is *Xenopsylla cheopis* — the Oriental Rat flea — although somewhere in the region of 100 different species are adept at passing the disease onto man. Plague is normally enzootic, that is, confined to specific animals in a specific area. However, should the situation change — say, the rodent population diminish — then the plague becomes *epizootic*, spreading to other animals as disease-carrying fleas seek other sources of blood.⁵ Transmission of bubonic plague comes via a bite from a flea, or through broken skin following exposure to plague-infected tissue.

One of the characteristics of bubonic plague is that the lymph nodes in the groin, armpit and neck areas swell — 'as large as a common apple'⁶ — and become hard. These formations are called 'buboes' (from the Greek *bubo*, meaning groin), hence the name 'bubonic'. Once the bacterium, *Yersinia pestis*, has entered the bloodstream, it makes its way to the liver, spleen, kidneys, lungs and brain. The incubation period is normally between two to six days, but can be as short as a few hours. Symptoms appear swiftly and without warning. The temperature rises dramatically, accompanied by shivering chills, vomiting, and headache. The victim is severely thirsty, restless, suffers vertigo and develops a sensitivity to light. If the plague has been contracted by a flea bite, a primary sore appears around the bite itself, manifesting as a small dark spot or a gangrenous ulcer. Because these sores change in colour they are perhaps the easiest of the plague tokens to recognise; tokens being telltale signs. Another of the tokens comes with *purpura*, purple areas beneath the skin caused by subcutaneous haemorrhaging. It is this blood that eventually dries and gives the body its black appearance. Another effect of the haemorrhaging is cell neurosis and a breakdown of the central nervous system, causing psychological disorders and spasms — the *danse macabre* associated with plague victims. Death usually comes with blood poisoning within the week. If untreated, the mortality rate is high, between 50% and 90%.

Of course there was no treatment back in 1348.

It is believed that people who did survive bubonic plague during times of the Black Death were, in fact, recovering from *Pestis minor*, a benign strain of the disease. The signs and symptoms are the same, but tend to subside within a week. Also in circulation in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Europe was pneumonic plague.⁷ Not as common as bubonic this form is, however, far more lethal (95% to 100% fatal). It is airborne, for one, meaning no bite or physical contact is required — merely inhaling the sputum of an infected party will cause infection. Victims rarely last above 48 hours. A third strain is septicaemic plague. Here, the *Yersinia pestis* bacteria invades the bloodstream directly and in massive numbers (the sheer quantity makes transmission via human fleas and body lice a possi-



bility). This form of plague is very rare but 100% lethal. Death comes within hours of infection, leaving no time for buboes to form.

A quick rule of thumb: bubonic is of the lymph glands, pneumonic of the lungs, and septicaemic of the blood. There, you qualify as a rat catcher. And if it's any comfort, man is not the preferred host for plague — virtually any animal will do.

in Paul Verhoeven's **Flesh + Blood** [1985], outlaws at the turn of the Sixteenth Century are ousted from their castle fortress when strips of bloody meat, infected with bubonic plague, are catapulted within. The Orthodox method of tending to plague victims, offers a priest, is that of bleeding; the assumption being that 'infected' blood will drain from the body. Of course it doesn't work like that and the body is instead weakened further. A bright young scholar insists that the cure lies in lancing the swellings. "Lancing the swellings is unchristian!" comes the reply. The scholar⁸ also dismisses the fact that plague is carried in putrid air. Although **Flesh + Blood** has no reason to pursue such lines of argument, it is worth speculating that while invalid against bubonic plague, the treatments dismissed by the scholar might in fact have resonant origins elsewhere. Physicians of the day had no way of knowing there existed more than one strain of pestilence. Though archaic when applied to the most common of



□ **The Perfect Weapon** [Novel; Bennett Michelson] This book has so many similarities with **The 11th Plague** that I would guess at authors Michelson and L.T. Peters being one and the same. Again the crux is biological weaponry, the Jews are the target, and the defamation of the Arab people is hardly subtle. While the two Jewish scientists, out to stop the power-mad PLO, have their shortcomings they're angels next to their Arab-American ex-assistant. Mariena Khoury — she's a flirt, greedy, rude, a traitor, a whore...

□ **Philadelphia** [Film; Jonathan Demme, 1993] As it's often referred to as 'the plague of the Twentieth Century', AIDS is hereby represented by **Philadelphia**. A passing tip of the hat goes to **A Virus Knows No Morals** [d: Rosa von Praunheim, 1977], **AIDS: The Killer Plague** [d: Aristide Mas-saccesi, 1986; unmade?] and **Hidden Rage** [1988] a thoroughly tasteless effort in which an AIDS victim metes out revenge, raping as many women as he can get a hold of. AIDS killers also figure in **City in Panic** [1997], but as it's unwatchable I'm not sure how.

□ **The Pied Piper** [Film; Jacques Demy, 1972] While no overt reference is made to plague in Browning's poem, Demy incorporates it into this adaptation of the legend. What a vile viewing experience it is too, with Donovan as the pixie-hatted piper and Diana Dors as somebody's mother.

□ **Plague** [Novel; Graham Masterton] 'Not even the stars looked down on the Twentieth Century city that had become, at last, the realisation of a Fifteenth Century nightmare.'

□ **Plague** [Film; Ed Hunt, 1978] 'Phoney and stultifyingly boring,' according to **Martin's Movie and Video Guide**. Aka: **M3: The Gemini Strain**.

□ **The Plague** [Novel; Albert Camus/Film; Luis Puenzo] 'Smelli Smelli That's not the smell of death... that's how they smell before they die!'

□ **The Plague Dogs**

[Novel; Richard Adams/Film; Martin Rosen, 1982] Two hounds used for scientific research escape their lab. A hunt ensues when it's believed the dogs might be infected with bubonic plague. The first edition of the book (maybe others too) is illustrated by A. Wainwright, a man with the gift of making one boring landscape look uncannily like the next.

□ **Planet of the Apes**

[TV] No matter what the setting, virtually every long-running TV series will get round to plague eventually. In **Planet of the Apes**, an episode entitled 'The Survivor' has the human fugitives hiding in a hospital, behind a door marked 'plague'. Later, they escape detection from the apes by travelling in a 'dead cart'. Michael Elphick gets embroiled in plague-goings on for one episode of **Harry**, a series centred around a news agency. Even **Star Trek** and **Hutch** came down with a spot of plague in the Seventies. A plague of biblical proportions threatened the hi-tech **Bugs** team, when an unscrupulous pesticide company pinned their hopes on crop destruction and global famine. More recently, an episode of **The X-Files** had a deadly contagion on the loose, and the indecipherable **American Gothic** had a bout of weird plague.

□ **Population Doomsday**

[Novel; Don Pendleton] Not exactly plague, but pollution, from the author of the long-running 'Executioner' series. **1989: Population Doomsday** — as it was first published — opens with a letter from the author to one Dr Paul R. Ehrlich, Graduate Study for the Department of Biological Sciences, Stanford University, California. In it, Pendleton acknowledges that it was the doctor's non-fiction work, **The Population Bomb**, that prompted him to write his novel. He closes his letter 'in the high hope that the collective assault of fact and fiction will serve to help determine a much brighter scenario for Twentieth Century man than either of our books seem to offer'. How about donating your royalties to charity.

□ **Rabid**

the contagions — bubonic plague — bleeding of a victim and the avoiding of putrid air sound a lot more plausible when coupled to the less widespread plagues: septicæmic and pneumonic, respectively.

There were doctors in abundance. Rather, quacks on every corner. 'Besides the qualified,' wrote Boccaccio of the visitation in Florence in 1348⁶, 'there was now a multitude both of men and of women who practiced without having received the slightest tincture of medical science.'

In some quarters it was believed that to commit incest on the altar was the only sure preventative against infection. A supposed prophylactic during the Great Plague that hit London in Seventeenth Century was to have a pigeon cut in two parts and placed upon the primary sore. A plaster made of the yolk of an egg, herb of grace, and wheaten flour, would also suffice. Gervase Markam, in **The English Hus-Wife** [1615], proffers a remedial drink consisting of old ale and various herbs and pounded ivory. Five spoonfuls every morning, followed by chewing on the dried root of angelica, will 'surely preserve you from Infection'.⁹ Naturally ale in itself, if not medicinal, was a great distraction — half of England was on an unremitting drinking binge during the Great Plague. (Which probably accounts for the sightings of phantoms that crept the streets at night and laughed on the edge of the dead pits.¹⁰) Most remedies, however, were common only to individual communities; sometimes only to a particular family. Everyone it seemed had a preventative theory all of their own. Almost overnight, St Paul's Churchyard became a quacks' 'Harley Street' where outrageous medicines were sold for 12s 6d a bottle.

The thing that could really make a difference — hygiene — was virtually unheard of. No one bathed for fear the skin pores would open and receive the plague. Packed in stifling proximity, old London town houses were wood and straw and filthy. The streets were like a sewer — even the clothes and belongings of the plague dead were cast into them to be picked by poor. As noted by the beggar in William Bullen's **Dialogue against the pestilence**: 'We look for old cast coats, jackets, hose, belts and shoes.' And of the dead: 'God send me of them'.

In some instances, the houses of the dead were looted. Those who tended the pits in which the dead were buried often stole the linen from the corpses. According to Defoe, nurses smothered patients to lessen the risk of infection and then made off with what goods they had.

Things gradually began to change, as they indeed had to. In 1569, a law was passed forbidding anyone from beating clothes out of windows or near the street. An actor of the day, Alleyn, 1593, wrote to his wife in London and advised 'every evening throw water before your door and in your backside, and have in our windows good store of rue and herb of grace'.¹¹ Fumigatory disinfectants came to the fore. Sprigs of juniper were burnt in churches, and the incense which was no longer a part of the service came back into use. The Deanery of St Paul's was fumigated twice a week with frankincense, while vestal garments hung over a heated pan absorbing fumes from angelica root, powdered and steeped in vinegar. William Taswell, in his autobiography published in 1852, recollects that as a boy he was sent on an errand to London armed with a picnic lunch, angelica and aromatics. Sulphur, saltpetre and ambergris were used



STOLE DISTRIBUTION presents

LA NUIT DES MORTS VIVANTS

PIRETE OF THE LIVING DEAD

avec
JUDITH O'DEA • RUSSELL STREINER
DUANE JONES • KARL HARDMAN
Scénario de
GEORGE A. ROMERO • JOHN A. RUSSO
Produit par RUSSELL STREINER et KARL HARDMAN
Monté par ROBERT D. ROSS

for burning beneath bedsheets and resin was burnt on coal fires. in 1603 — when in August the death toll reached a thousand a week — the Lord Mayor of London ordered that pitch and faggots be burnt in the streets, that families place wood outside their homes for that purpose. Throughout the city, fires were tended night and day by watchmen.

Eau de Cologne has its origins as a plague deterrent. Though pleasing aromas did nothing to actually dispel bubonic plague, it is worth noting that the essential oils of cinnamon and thyme, and of angelica and sandalwood, have proven efficient in combating yellow fever.

It is easy to misinterpret plague as being an artefact unique to the later-Middle Ages or London-of-long-ago. The sheer scale of these pandemics has made the disease and era synonymous. But the fact is, plague is recurring and quite often a way of life: a person could be born into times of plague and die in times of plague. When the Black Death reached epidemic proportions in the Fourteenth Century, the devastation was so great that civilisation came to a dead stop and remained in that state for several centuries. Europe slipped into its Dark Ages. Many generations knew nothing outside of a plague world.

[Film; David Cronenberg, 1977]
Much of Cronenberg's works deal with the psycho-biological and could be construed as each warranting a mention here. Let us suffice with but one. In **Rabid**, Marilyn Chambers develops an appetite for human blood after undergoing experimental surgery. So as not to have to incorporate a whole slew of vampire movies into this list, Marilyn's 'bite' doesn't actually produce more bloodsuckers, but a raging contagion that sends victims mad. That said, doesn't **The Satanic Rites of Dracula** [d: Alan Gibson, 1973] have a Twentieth Century plague subplot?

- **The Seventh Seal** [Film; Ingmar Bergman, 1957]
Man with plague stumbles through woods.
- **Space Master X-7**

[Film; Edward Bernds, 1957]

Like vampirism, to attempt to include all biological threats from outer space would cause this list to go into compilation overload. However, I'm going to include **Space Master X-7** because as an alien fungus film, it bears a remarkable similarity to Hammer's **X The Unknown** [d: Leslie Norman] of the previous year.

□ **The Stand**

[TV] Three-part TV-movie based on the novel by Stephen King. The weak finale in King's book (if you make it that far) becomes utterly absurd when transposed to the screen. Indeed, the only part of this TV venture worth watching is the opening installment, when the Captain Trips virus goes to work — the shots of streets littered with dead bodies is highly impressive, conveying well the bug's devastation.

□ **The Survivors**

[TV] The pre-credit sequence to this long-running TV show had a scientist dropping a test-tube in a laboratory. A deadly virus is accidentally unleashed and 95% of mankind is wiped out. The series wasn't too involved in the spread of bacteria, but concentrated instead on the fortunes of a group of — that's right — survivors, coming to terms with their predicament and searching for other... survivors.

□ **The Swiss Family Robinson**

[Film; Ken Annakin, 1960] Disney's cute tale of a shipwrecked family has a sequence in which some of the family Robinson, whilst at sea, avert a pirate ship attack by displaying the nautical signal for 'plague on board'.

□ **Virus**

[Film; Kinji Fukasaku, 1980] All-star cast (including Bo Svenson) in a film concerning the aftermath of nuclear war and plague.

□ **W.E.I.R.D. World**

[Film; William Malone, 1995] TV movie starring Ed O'Neill. No further information.

□ **Zombie Creeping Flesh**

[Film; Vincent Dawn, 1981] A toxic leak in the jungles of Papua New Guinea animates the dead. Like most zombie yarns, every bite serves to amplify the situation. ■

in the Bible, plague of the bubonic variety is believed to be at the heart of the First Book of Samuel, Chapter Five ('...and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts.') In **History of the Peloponnesian War**, Thucydides chronicles the conflict between Athens and Sparta in the years BC 431 to BC 404 and relates that a plague struck which devastated much of the population of Athens. Plagues ravaged the Roman Empire. Compounded with other recirculating diseases — such as malaria — Roman society was under a constant biological barrage. In some instances, 5,000 deaths a day are said to have occurred in Rome.

Pockets of bubonic plague were common all over Europe, erupting in isolated instances until, in 1086, it reached epidemic proportions. But with over one million dead, 1086 was the easy end of the stick. Punching holes in the populace, plague started taking out wholesale. In 1348 it is estimated over three-and-a-half million died. In 1377 over two million. 1430 — two million. 1603 — three million. 1690 — four million. A pandemic which started in South West China in 1892, reaching Bombay in 1896, left six million dead in India alone. Bubonic plague was finally brought into some kind of scientific focus in 1894, when the infectious agent *Yersinia pestis*¹² was discovered. Came another breakthrough in 1897 when it was proven that fleas transmitted the plague.

Nowadays, guidebooks for travellers warn of plague areas. Vaccination is only advised if you are 'laboratory personal [sic] doing research on the plague'¹³ — immunity is short-term and revaccination has adverse side affects. Instead, apply insect repellent to the legs and don't touch sick or dead animals. (Presumably if you see lots of dead rats, walk away, too.) While urban epidemics are not common, outbreaks of bubonic and pneumonic plague do still occur, as they did a few years ago in several of India's townships. And in the Southwest United States, bubonic plague has been breaking out on an annual basis since 1924.

Which leads us nicely to Bennett Michelson's 1980 terrorist-plague novel, **The Perfect Weapon**. Runs the jacket blurb: 'Armed with a bizarre medical secret, they plotted a Holocaust for the Eighties!' An enzyme, cultivated only to wipe out Jews, infiltrates the US and is transmitted in the mail. That's the plot. It isn't a happy ending.

Did you know that if you were to fax an order through to the American Type Culture Collection [ATCC] of Rockville, Ohio, requesting biological warfare agents, then — providing your letterhead looked officious enough and you accepted full responsibility for shipment — chances are you'd get it? Larry Wayne Harris did just that when he requested three phials of freeze dried bubonic plague germ samples for the 'American Society of Microbiology'. It cost him \$240 and they arrived via Federal Express. (Well-packed, naturally.) Only when the talkative Harris phoned the ATCC to chase up his order were suspicions raised. Officials paid a call on the American Society of Microbiology in May 1995 only to find it didn't exist. It was Harris' home address. Inside, they found a small laboratory, several M-1 carbine rifles, smoke grenades and a collection of literature from Aryan Nation and other white separatist groups. The phials were in the glove box of Harris' car. Unopened. ■

1. The second-hand copy of Masterton's book utilised in this piece, picked up at a charity shop, had evidence of once being masturbation-fodder. The little pencil marks that appeared at the top corner of certain pages, I eventually ascertained, were markers and had been applied whenever a lurid sex scene was in evidence.

2. It's a ridiculous antidote hypothesis anyway... but in keeping with ridiculous plague theories throughout history. In Camus' book, some townspeople believe peppermint lozenges will prevent infection.

3. There is an exception. St Rock — sometimes *Roch* or *Roche* — is also a patron of plagues despite him having nothing to do with arrows. His association comes from having travelled northern Italy during times of pestilence, 'healing the victims by supernatural means' [**A Dictionary of Saints**, Donald Attwater. Middlesex: Pan, 1976]. He was eventually thrown in prison where he perished. The circumstances surrounding this part of the tale conflict: in one account, Rock himself caught the plague in Piacenza, but he recovered and made it home to Montpellier safely. However, so ravaged was he on his return, nobody recognised him, not even his relatives, and he was imprisoned as an impostor. Another account has Rock being incarcerated in Lombardy, believed to be a spy. Rock also has a cake-giving ceremony in France on his feast day, August 16th. Not plague as such, this is to do with a disease of another kind: rabies. Dogs were — maybe still are — taken 'to his altar to be blessed and get their protective biscuit for a year' [**Rabies: The Facts You Need To Know**, G.N. Henderson & Kay White. London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd, 1978]. Don't think it stops there: several other saints have the dog as an emblem.

4. Black Death wasn't a name applied to the epidemic until much later, probably around 1550. During the Middle Ages the plague was referred to as 'the pestilence', as was every other disaster that befell the land.

5. Rats. Despite references to the contrary, 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' and its tale of 'brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats' would appear to have some basis as a plague allegory. Robert Browning immortalised the mysterious piper in his poem of 1842, but the figure appears in writing much earlier than that. Critics say the legend has its true roots in the story of the Children's Crusade of 1212, when many thousands of children were lost during a misguided expedition from Germany to Genoa and Rome. On the sub-

ject of misappropriated legends, there is also doubt that the words to the nursery rhyme 'Ring-a-ring o' roses' divulge a folk remedy of the Black Death.

6. **The Decameron** of Giovanni Boccaccio. Trans: J.M. Rigg. London: Navarre Society, 1977

7. Arriving in England in 1485, sometimes confused with the plague, circulated another disease. This was sweating sickness, also commonly known as 'Knave Know Thy Master' because it was thought only to kill the rich and middle-aged.

8. Interestingly, later on, the ('heretical') scholar is captured by the outlaws and briefly used as target practice. He is left wounded with an arrow — a 'dart of plague' — jutting forth from his hand.

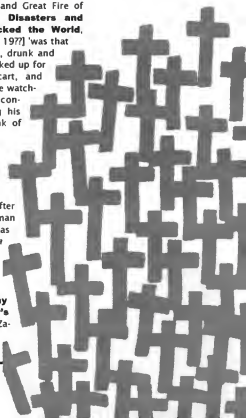
9. Unrelated to the plague, but complete with its own strange 'cure' is scrofula, or 'King's Evil'. Those who had the disease — a form of tuberculosis — went to the King to be touched. James II is recorded as having touched no less than 5,000 sufferers in a single outbreak in 1687. As for smallpox, parents deliberately exposed their children to the infection so that they might escape it in adulthood.

10. Probably accounts for the jokes too. 'Perhaps the best of the few jokes of the plague period,' writes Michael Geelan in his essay 'The Plague and Great Fire of London' [**Fifty Great Disasters and Tragedies that Shocked the World**, London: Oldhams Press, 1977] 'was that of the poor blind piper, drunk and insensible, who was picked up for dead by a passing cart, and scared the life out of the watchmen by recovering consciousness and skirling his pipes on the very brink of the pit.'

11. Quoted by G.B. Harrison, **Shakespeare's Fellows**. London, 1923.

12. Which is named after Alexandre Yersin, the man who discovered it. It was referred to as *Pasteurella pestis* until quite recently.

13. **Culture Shock! Travel and Stay Healthy: A Traveller's Medical Guide**, Paul Zakowich. London: Kuiperard, 1996.



Pardon Me But Your Worm Is In My Crotch

GREGORY DARK'S SNAKE PIT

ANTHONY PETKOVICH



WORMS. They're slithery, slimy, cold, wet, clammy... in a word, gross. So why did sleaze queen Roxanne Hall quit porn to get naked in a bathtub filled with over 100 of these oozy critters? The answer lies in Gregory Dark's **Snake Pit**, Roxanne's final fuck film before... ahem... resting with the worms.

MAX VON SYDOW?... IN A PORN FILM?

While **Snake Pit** is touted as being porn's answer to Ingmar Bergman's **The Seventh Seal**, spare yourself the torture of deciphering any frame-by-frame similarities; Instead, just focus freely on the abstract imagery, the nasty sex, and the neat girlie interviews throughout the movie. Trust me, you won't be disappointed.

Director Dark shrewdly makes no pretension about having a 'plot' in this one. The film starts off in a stark, industrial LA alley. A Vegas-type hustler named Hatman is rolling dice with three goons in black gangster suits and fedoras, as well as the prerequisite spy sunglasses (one of the garishly fashioned gorillas is even stroking a surrealistically 'deformed' arm shaped like a Doberman Pinscher!). But the high rollers aren't playing for money. Rather, the stakes are a pile of plastic bones, miniature rubber skeletons, and five-and-dime Halloween masks. Hatman keeps winning, each time donning a mask which sort of... transports his mind, soul, alter ego, whatever the fuck into various sexual fantasies. But who are these gangster types? Are they ghosts from Hatman's past? Representatives of death? And what about Hatman himself? Is he Everyman trying to stave off Death though a game of craps, much like Max Von Sydow delaying the Grim Reaper through an extended chess game in **The Seventh Seal**? And what about the 'snake pit'? What exactly is it? Is it the alley? The female hot box? The serpentine mind of man? Or just plain ol' Hell? Dark gives no pat answer — leaving symbolic analyses up to the viewer — all the while vacillating between crap game, sexual flashbacks (i.e. humans fucking), and porn starlets 'confessing' to the camera.

VEE HAVE AN VAYS...

Apparently Dark worked closely with a psychologist to come up with

a list of intensely 'probing' questions for his **Snake Pit** starlets.

"When the cops Interrogate you," Dark told me before the movie's release, "they're trying to elicit a confession, trying to find out information which you're not easily going to give up. In other words, they're trying to break you down. And those are the kinds of questions I set up with this psychologist. If a girl started to cry, that's good — I wanted to find out what makes her tick. Because, see, I don't care about, 'Well, gee, do you like sex?' or 'Do you think you're really sexy?' or 'Show me your pussy.' I don't *give* a shit about that. They'll do that sort of thing in a heartbeat. Instead, I'd ask questions like, 'What is evil?' Then, nine questions later, 'What is evil?' again, to get a slightly different response. And nine questions after that, 'What is evil?' In other words, equating evil with evil.

"The most important aspect is breaking them down and then, in a sense, allowing them to display their true ways, because you've given them license *not* conform to societal or even 'porn-family' demands. You've given them license to admit to themselves that they're basically evil... evil whores. And once they agree to that fact — that they're useful only for the purpose of *dick* fodder, so to speak — then they're able to fully unveil their sexuality, their trampiness, their sluttiness."

The starlets' obviously unrehearsed answers range from hilariously inarticulate, to deeply horny, to provocatively twisted.

ARE YOU A SLUT?

"I don't feel like a slut," answers slut Dawn Burning In Dark's first interrogative fuck sequence. No *great* looker, Dawn is a blonde Amazon — with big fake tits and deep golden tan — who resembles a trashier version of porn psycho Lisa Ann. But that's where the likeness ends. For Ms Burning definitely has a much heftier hankerin' for horse cock than Ms LA. But *is* Dawn a slut?

"I just prefer to say I feel kinky now and then," she says. "Am I dirty? I enjoy what I do. I enjoy everything that I've been."

And in a dingy, dungeon-like room, upon a worn-out, creaky bed, Dawn enacts some major fucking sluttiness. Four black-sulsted phantoms (spectral emissaries from the crap game, no doubt) systematically show up and proceed to rip her apart. They finger fuck her (simultaneously at one point), expand her larynx with cockmeat, and ultimately give her a good doggie-style porking. In perfect cadence to the loud creaking bed, her big brown butt cheeks jiggle like a pair of jelly-fish having epileptic fits. Dawn's horny, guttural groans embellish this primo whacking material.

"What makes me a slut?" she rhetorically asks after all the sperm's been sprayed. "I never said I was a slut."

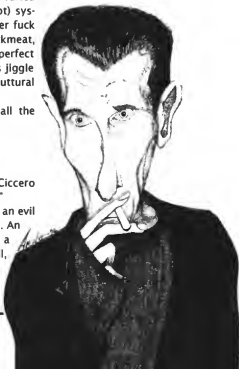
True. Actions do speak louder than words.

WHADDUP, EVIL?

"I think the definition of evil is... *me!*" Italian-French Mia Ciccerio perkily confesses in scum scene #2. "I am an evil. I know I am."

That's right, folks. You heard her right: she *is* an evil. But an evil what? Go ahead, be creative, fill in the blank. An evil door mat. An evil milk shake. An evil fart. An evil slut who, once donning a pair of sunglasses, looks like Ray Charles. All of the above? Hell, why not. *Evil*, baby!

Laura Palmer, a Czech mate formerly known as Petra, is Mama Mia's co-slut in this episode. She, too, has an opinion





on evil. "I tink evil is bat vitch looks like goot," says Palmer. "It pretends to be goot... goot for you... goot for owl, but it's *really* bat..."

Very goot, Laura. Luke... I mean, look... I'll be totally honest with you: of all the women in this film, these two are my *least* favourite. So I'm not going to bullshit you — their lesbian sequence is somewhat tepid.

BUT...

...When stud T.T. Boy shows up (as yet another spectral rack-teer) things *do* liven up. Upon a standard porn sofa, Boy pummels the open mouths of Mia and Laura with his swollen sword, at one point zealously yanking it out of Ciccero's mouth to produce this sort of popping noise, kinda like the sound you make when you pluck the inside of your cheek. Hilarious. Ciccero finds it funny, too, burying her uncontrollable giggles in her shaggy head of hair. Of the two gals, I definitely like Ciccero better. Her body is nicely tanned, her butt healthy, her accent sexy, and, quite obviously, she has a sense of humour. Palmer, on the other hand, might have a tight body, but she's way pale. And she harbours this insincere attitude of, "Tall me, who do I have to fuck on deez set to get dee green card, ah?" T.T. Boy gets her back on track, though, throwing a good 'n' steady missionary fuck into the bitch. Palmer, however, starts none too subtly pushing him back with a meddlesome hand. Bad move. Boy promptly flings the appendage aside and begins *really* banging her, not unlike a munchkin on methamphetamine. (By the way, is it my imagination, or is this guy actually getting shorter in height?) Ciccero rises to the occasion by firmly holding down Palmer's problematic palm. Hear, hear. Boy now cranks his captive twat with all the energy his pint-sized body can muster, drilling it *so* hard, Palmer's eyes actually flare as if saying, "EASY, motherfucker!!"

After the incredible shrinking man pops Placenta Helper onto our two female wogs, Dark pops 'em the big question: *Are you sluts?*

"Every woman is a slut in my book," says Mia. But does that include our green-card grubber Laura?

"If i feel i'm slut?" Palmer retorts. "No, I doan. Vy vood I?"

Somevun send Laura, please, copy of deez tape, ah?

DISTURBING SEX ANYONE?

"The most disturbing sexual fantasy that I've gotten off on," confesses Kim Kataine, Dark cuntstant #4, "had to be when I was tied up and fucked in the pussy and ass at the same time." She punctuates this shocking revelation with a glowing smile. Boy howdy, Kim, musta been *real* disturbing. Although this particular sequence — set by a swimming pool on a big lava rock — is a bit too brightly-lit for my sleazy taste, it packs just enough weirdness to keep things interesting.

Dressed in an aqua-blue bikini, Kataine is sunbathing on the rock, when yet another black-dressed phantom (Alex Sanders) gradually emerges from the bowels of the pool like a zombie from the swamps, slowly wading his way out of the chlorine to gnaw on some tender flesh. Although Kim has a new tit job, she still looks as pretty as ever — and has *never* been filthier. I mean, how else would you describe a woman eating Alex Sanders' farts? Filthy! Even Dark recently admitted how pleased he was with Kim's... er... transformation. Said Dark: "She's disintegrated into a really interesting place... from a prissy little bitch, to a full-on slut."

Way to go, Kimbol

"I pretty much let anybody take control of my body during sex," Kataine later adds. "And I guess that's why I'm a slut... I love my sex in every way." And that includes getting doggied in the buttock on a rock (must be murder on the knees) by Squire Sanders, who flaunts a kooky-looking Ronald Reagan mask while getting the ol' beef jerky murky.

Consequently, after Kim gives it up for the glipper, we're left with the provocative image of the Reagan mask slowly descending into the pool next to a floating red rose. A shot begging for symbolic analysis, sure, but a pretty cool one, too.

So, what about Roxanne Hall? Don't worry. I haven't forgotten her — or her circus of worms. They're on the way... shortly...

ROSES ARE RED, VIOLENCE IS BLUE

"Certain women enjoy rough sex because it's not always romantic," exotic-looking Selena tells our snake camera "It's not nice smooth hands going up and down the body. They like a little bit of excitement. Kind of being raped — but willingly, like a fantasy type of sickness within themselves."

Well, Selena certainly stays sick in this scum sequence, one of my faves in the film.

Actually, Selena caught me off guard. When I saw her on the video's boxcover — with her sultry Iranian-looks; dirty-blonde, silver-streaked hair; and a silken white sheet flowing around her fleshy body — I thought for sure she was foreign goods. Then she opened that luscious mouth of hers and "BAM!", I got hit 'tween the eyes with maximum LA dum-dum. No matter, though. With such natural tits, juicy buns, and penetrating fuck-me-fuck-me eyes... well, hallowed be thy Selena is what I say. Hands down, the deadliest female in the pic.

Anyway, as Selena whorishly reclines on a classical couch, silk sheet barely sheathing her naughty bits, John Decker and Jay Ashley show up as another pair of phantasmal fucksters. Decker's arm sports the tiny head of a Doberman Pinscher (the grotesque apparition we saw earlier in the alley), while Ashley's limb brandishes the shrunken head of a pig. Cool — and clever. For as dog and pig start individually 'chewing' on Selena's fantastic nipples, we quickly realise Dark is showcasing sex with animals — *without* the animals. And bestiality never appeared more alluring.

Decker gets the show rolling by reaming Selena's shit shrine with ready tongue while she mouth-humps Ashley's fire hydrant. After a brief spell, the two brothers grim switch places so Ashley can suck a little sphincter-a-la-Selena. It's not long before Decker is fucking her in the missionary position.

(Pervert's note: Rare, indeed, is the porn starlet who looks directly into her fucker's eyes. And Selena does — most sincerely. She also moans with similar candour. Love her!)

A Hubert Humphrey mask eventually makes an appearance on one of the goonies, adding more welcomed strangeness. Ashley soon starts poodle pumping Selena — getting the sofa rocking, her butt cheeks talking, and our Valley Girl squawking — ultimately blasting jamba juice (spa-loot) straight up one of her nostrils like milky antihistamine.

"Do I think I'm a slut?" Selena later asks her hot 'n' horny self. "If I said 'yes' I would take that with pride. Otherwise, no, I don't."

Uh... yeah... whatever, Selena.



OF LOVE AND HAYIT

Next up, Prague pussy Leah Martini ponders into our camera Gregorius.

"Vut kind of man I hayit?" she pensively reflects. "i hayit the man whose worrying and don't feel what it is sex... what is it da' play-joor of sex. Diz kind of man I hayit. Yeah, really."

Translation?

"I like da sex from da man who fucks me harrdd, fass, and naztee... even by da man who is... um... achhh... how you say?... ah, yes! da man who is vite and uptight. Da Vince Voyeur!"

The woman *must* be an angel. Next to Selena, she's definitely one of the more delicious females in the film: a golden-skinned blonde with well-proportioned tits (neither basketball or tangerine-sized), a pear-shaped, pillowy ass you could easily sleep upon, and what seems a bottomless pit of good nature (she's willing to boink Vince V., isn't she?).

In a stark white bathroom, against a deep-dish bathtub, Leah inhales Vinnie's dickie like a human vacuum cleaner on full throttle, nearly yanking the damn thing out by the roots. She craves it! And when Voyeur slams her from behind, Martini glows as if on the wedding altar. I dig her deep, cunt eyes, her exuberant smile. I even like her prominent Wife of Bath's gapped teeth.

Vincenzo ultimately enlists the aid of an Alan Cranston mask while doing Leah in the canine position; at one point tilting his head so the hideously hollow eyes peer sinisterly at us. It's the best acting Voyeur's done (even if his face is completely hidden). Eventually, he deposits lumpy yoghurt on Leah's puss to show his gratitude (nice guy), exits somewhat callously, and then... *another* stud walks in! Leah looks totally beguiled.

"Uh... vuz deez in da' screept?" her baffled face seems to ask. Yet she gladly yields to this new invader, who wastes no time paying proper homage to her lil' brown gas chamber with his curious tungarooski. It's not long before he eagerly plugs this vapour vent with penile meat. Leah returns the favour by doing a reversed cowgirl on the guy, her anus banging down so hard on the poor slob's scrotum, I'm surprised one of his testicles doesn't blast out of its sack like a bloody meteor. *Ka-powee!!*

But what about Roxanne-fucking-Hall? What's the scoop? Okay. Let's get to it...

STRAIGHT TO HELL

"I really want to go to hell," Roxanne Hall confesses while riding our snake train. "I believe I'm destined to go to hell... to be burned, tortured, humiliated for the rest of eternity." Well, a Dark film's definitely a good starting place, Roxanne. "Certain women enjoy rough sex," the hellhound hussy continues. "I suppose they like to feel humiliated, cheap, dirty, nasty."

Her earnest smirk forewarns us of filthy things to come...

On a queen-sized bed, Roxanne is verily gang banged by three guys in anonymous black suits in what's undoubtedly the film's nastiest sequence.

"They're sort of like businessmen from the Fifties," laughed Dark, giving his own interpretation of the mysterious men in black. But wait, it gets funnier. While these 'salesmen' boink Roxanne, their hats keep falling off. And one inept bozo whose name we'll mercifully withhold (Jay Ashley) is about to rear-end Roxanne, when the mallet-

head slips on his own loose-fitting socks, bouncing off the bed like a hopeless retard. Ha! Ha! Don't worry, though. Any light humour is perfectly balanced with heavy-metal sex.

"Mike me come," British-born Hall initially commands her three rent-a-hoses in between licks of hairy male buttohole. The boys waste no time pounding her poo-poo pantry *real good*. Roxanne's gasps are gluttonous. Her eyes roll into her skull. Her body shivers as if suffering from acute hypothermia. Put a fourth dude in the scene and I sincerely believe this possessed tart would be spewing green bile, cursing God, and twisting her head in 360° spins in a matter of seconds. No. Three cocks are definitely enough bad company for Ms Hall. I mean, c'mon, they butt fuck her, two of 'em double-pussy penetrate her, she undergoes multiple orgasms... what more do ya want? — Quentin Tarantino shuffling through the room while crooning 'I'm Just A Gigolo'?

According to reports from **Hustler Erotic Video Guide**, Roxanne's 'multiple orgasms made her so sensitive, she could hardly be touched', which explains why she occasionally shoves her three goons away, recoiling to a corner of the bed, while coquettishly leering at her ass assailants — before, of course, coming back for more wrinkled mortadella.

My favourite moment, however, has to be when Roxanne is penetrated in the pooper (for the thirtieth time, or something), goes wacko, yet still hangs in there. Hoo-ray!

"Oh-ho-ho," she moans in mixed pleasure and pain. "Oh my God... Not again. Not again. Not again... Oh, GOD!... oh shit!..." (is she having an orgasm or a bad case of the squirts?) Her expressions, of course, are great: a sex-injected look of fuzzy intoxication abruptly contorting into a snarl. Catch it quick, though, as in the blink of a sperm-soaked eyeball, it's thoroughly muddled by all three phantoms popping off in her puss.

"What makes me a slut?" Roxanne later asks herself. "If I feel horny, I will fuck anybody, at anytime, anywhere."

Now why aren't there more girls like that on Hollywood Boulevard?

MONSTERS OF THE ID

So *why* did Roxanne Hall quit porn? Everything seemed so peachy keen, so hunky dory, so tutti-frutti. At least, on the surface.

"The one thing I fear above all is myself," Roxanne reveals at the



PEOPLE WHO READ HEADPRESS

The Melvins — on the set of their Dark-directed music video.

Photo © Anthony Petkovich



film's conclusion. "I know one day I'm gonna end up pushing it too far, because I'm still at the experimental stage. I like knives. I like to be cut. I like to be choked. I like weird sex. I like it rough. And I knooooooooow one of these days I'll end up dying with a smile on my face."

According to Dark, Roxanne had 19 (count 'em, 19) orgasms during her scene, and — in addition to the mind-racking, soul-stripping interrogation process — *readily* quit the business thereafter.

"I brought up too many fucked up things out of her fucked up head," Dark admitted. "She did anything. We were just moving her through her psychological landscape, and she just overloaded... went crazy."

CONQUER HER, WORMS

So if the girl went bananas, why did she star in Dark's recent music video for the Melvins, in which she gets naked and cavorts with maggots in a bathtub?

"Oh, this isn't porno stuff," Dark told me about a week after the Melvins shoot. "Besides, I didn't push her too hard in this video," he added with a laugh.

"It was just time to take a break," Roxanne herself told me point blank on the set of the Melvins shoot, minutes before actually taking the worm plunge. "I've been working in this business for two years straight without any sort of break, and **Snake Pit** seemed as good a place as any to start a vacation."

But worms? I mean, why worms?

"I just liked the idea of a live girl who's being eaten by worms as if she's dead," said Dark. "She's sort of alive and dead at once."

Like a goofy schoolgirl, Roxanne seemed squeamishly excited by it all, too. After the worms had been planted on her bare chest, wiggling and wagging all over the place, Dark and cameraman were setting up the shot and, at one point, totally ignoring their star. In turn, they failed to notice a clump of the soul-less devils slowly sliding down, down, down into Roxanne's own snake pit.

"They're on my CROTCH!" the Brit burst out with a frightened yet similarly titillated shriek. What, no shorts? Part of the bargain apparently.

"I wouldn't let her wear panties," Dark said. "The prerequisite for her being in the video was, 'If you're going to do this, you gotta be totally naked.' I was very happy with her work, too. I mean, it's like the best piece of film I've made in eight years, even though it's the first music video I've done."

He's right. If you think the editing on such previous Dark works as **Sex Freaks**, **Flesh**, and the current **Snake Pit** was impressive, check out this Melvins thing (formally titled 'Bar-X-the Rocking M', from the band's 1996 Atlantic Records album **Stag**). Loosely structured around a voodoo ritual, it's a blinding kaleidoscope of freaky images including devils, skeletons, chicken men, pig men, witch doctors, raw meat being branded, loads of cryptic religious icons, and the Melvins themselves turning into goggle-eyed zombies. Watch it on MTV; but especially look for the directors cut (featuring the infamous worm sequence) in your more or less — depending on your tolerance for poseurs and charlatans — trendy nite clubs.

In the meantime, the image of live worms crawling over Roxanne Hall's soft British flesh is a pretty powerful image with which to

bid us pornoholics sweet adieu. But was it good for her? Was it *better* than sex?

"Yes!" Roxanne ecstatically squealed, vigorously scrubbing off excess insect muck with a lifesaving beach towel. "But i can still feel them crawling all over me!!..."

Hmm... Phantom porn pains, perhaps? Oh well, *c'est la guerre*, Roxy baby.

SLUTS IN THE DARK

And finally, with all the interrogations concluded, worms back in their appropriate cans, and a squeaky-clean Roxanne safely asleep between crisp clean bed sheets, what of the Grand Inquisitor himself? What's his take on sluttism?

"One has to first define 'slut' as having negative or positive connotations," sayeth Dark. "And, to me, it has positive connotations. I prefer girls that are sluts. They're the biggest turn-ons on earth. And in films, they're uninhibited, they're easy to work with. They like to fuck! They don't look at it as a pay-day. What's fascinating is the obsessive quality of their own sexuality and their need to portray it, either in an exhibitionistic fashion or in their personal lives.

"Needless to say, in this day and age of many venereal diseases, it's inherently a problem to participate in that sort of activity if you're a woman, and one certainly doesn't want to fuck too many girls like that without too many condoms on."

Well, there you have it, folks. Enjoy (yet be wary of) yer sluts — be they male, female, whatever. And in between your steady diet of *sa-lutto's*, play it smart: rent **Snake Pit** — it's the safest sex around. But watch it with a six-pack of King Cobra in order to get that maximum bite. ■

Snake Pit [1996]

A Dark Works Production, in association with Evil Angel Video; starring Roxanne Hall, Selena, Dawn Burning, Leah Martin, Kim Kataine, Mia Ciccerio, Laura Palmer, Hatman, John Decker, T.T. Boy, Alex Sanders, Wilde Oscar, Michael J. Cox, Vince Voyeur, Rick Masters, Jeremy Steele, Nick East; music by Commando; written by Liam Keansburg; produced and directed by Gregory Dark.

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SKULL-FUCKING

Nano-technology, Dwarf Machines and Mind Control

SIMON WHITECHAPEL

In her book **Letters from a War-Zone**, the American feminist Andrea Dworkin rounds up all the usual suspects. Except Ms Dworkin doesn't suspect; she *knows*. Part of the book, for example, is a transcript of a hearing in New York at which she presented the case for the anti-porn lobby. One of her arguments for the harm done by porn was the existence of an extreme new genre of snuff film being exported from Vietnam, the action of which consisted of a woman's head being cut off and having all its available orifices penetrated by eagerly erect penises. The new genre even had a name: "skull fucking" movies. This, Ms Dworkin claimed, was what the mountain-top snow-ball of **Playboy** and other so-called soft porn had turned into by the time it had rolled down to the valleys: a cataclysmic avalanche of woman-destroying necro-porn so hard it was off the Moh's scale.

Alas for Andrea and her disciples, the hearing was too rotten with patriarchal concepts like logic and rules of evidence to just take her word for it. Had she ever seen such a movie herself? Well, no. Did she know anyone who had? Well, no. So — the hearing didn't actually go on to ask, but should have done — she had exactly the same evidence for the existence of these movies as she did for the existence of Santa Claus? Well, yes.

Well, actually, that isn't — as you'll see if you turn to the appendix — quite what happened. And anyway, although it may indeed be playing in glorious Technicolor at a secret venue somewhere near you at this very moment, for all I or Andrea Dworkin can prove to the contrary, it isn't actually that sort of skull-fucking I'm going to talk about in this article. Nonetheless, I haven't mentioned it just to entice all you putrefaction-hungry **Headpress** blowflies at least this far into my literary web. Andrea Dworkin believes passionately in the existence of skull-fucking movies, just as you don't — though you just might love to see one if you could — for the same reason. That reason is the contents of a lump of pinkish-white organic matter weighing a couple of kilos. The contents of the brain, in other words. Her beliefs, thoughts and actions, just like yours, mine, and everybody else's, are dependent on the way certain organic molecules and certain persistent patterns of electromagnetic energy are arranged inside her skull. If someone could get inside her skull and, without her consent, modify those organic molecules and patterns of energy, and thus modify her beliefs, thoughts and actions, that is what, for the purposes of this article, I would mean by skull-fucking.

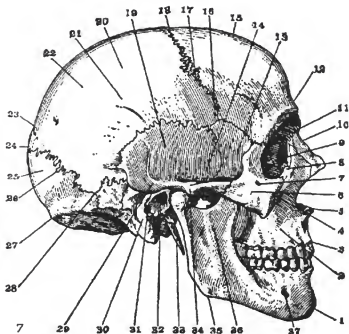
Some people — not all of them religious sentimentalists or scientifically illiterate, for they include the Nobel Laureate neurophysiologist Sir John Eccles — would object that I am making the crudely materialist assumption that the mind is entirely and solely dependent on the physical functioning of the brain. Alas for them, the evidence is overwhelmingly on the side of crude materialists like me. The brain runs on chemicals and electricity, and if you interfere with it chemically or electrically, you invariably affect not only the way it works but also the way the mind works. The greatest Intellect in the world, wedded to the most ferocious will-power and most rigid self-control, is not proof against even an extremely ancient and low-tech chemical skull-fucker like alcohol. Get a saint drunk enough and he might well shag his own grandmother. He might well cut off his own genitals as a hangover cure, of course, but then that's because Christianity has always carefully avoided learning the fact that guilt, like drunkenness, is an electrochemical state of mind.

Making people drunk against their will has been possible for thousands of years; making them guilty against their will, if it isn't already possible, very soon will be. Not too much longer after that it is possible to do a great deal more to people against their will than that. And it will be possible to do it in such a way that they will not only accept it, but welcome it. Skull-fucking is going to feel good, at least after it's over. You may not even know it's being done to you at the time. This is how it might work.

DWARF-MACHINES

Despite all the nonsense talked and written about the "Cyber-Revolution", there can be very little doubt that it is going to be the one of two or three most

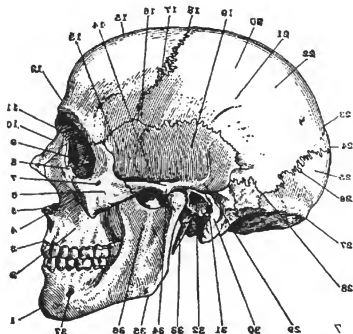




significant periods so far in human history. The irony is that although it is promoted with such hyperbole very largely to make money for those who are developing and organising it, when it does actually take place the concept of money — indeed, of capitalism as a whole — is going to be one of those things it either changes beyond recognition or destroys all together. But, it hardly needs saying, there is more to the Cyber-Revolution than the internet. There is more to the Cyber-Revolution than artificial intelligence and Über-Computers. There is more, because there is a great deal less.

Let me beg forgiveness for that gnomic utterance and try to explain it. Something consistently overlooked among all the weekly on-line supplements and white-heat-of-technology documentaries is a branch of contemporary research known as nano-technology. "Nano-" is from a Greek word meaning "dwarf", and nano-technology is a form of engineering that is concerned with the construction and use of machines smaller than a grain of sand. A *lot* smaller than a grain of sand. At some point in the near future we are going to see the mass-production of machines that have been built not by the crude, clumsy fitting together of macroscopic components easily visible to the naked eye, but by the direct manipulation of molecules and atoms. We are going to see highly efficient, highly intelligent machines that are not only smaller than grains of sand but also smaller than red-blood cells. And we are going to see these machines in their billions.

There will be so many of them, in fact, and they will be so cheap and easy to manufacture, that they are going to change every aspect of life. A good example, because it's so much a part of everyone's life, is clothing. A few tens of thousand of years ago, human beings dressed in furs and leaves. In time, cloth woven from things like wool and silk was developed, but all that the Twentieth Century has so far added to the sartorial repertoire is the artificial fibres and plastics. Clothing is still something that does nothing for itself. The idea of



clothing that does anything for itself is ludicrous. We have to put it on, take it off, wash it when it becomes dirty, repair it when it is damaged or worn out. Think of what will happen when the cloth from which we make clothing incorporates nano-technology — that is, think of what will happen when clothing is made from *smart* cloth. Every garment will contain millions of microscopic machines, each with its own onboard supercomputer. Clothing will clean itself, repair itself, even adapt itself to the weather and the day-by-day vagaries of fashion and personal taste.

The same ability will be given to everything — absolutely everything. Buildings will simply be larger and somewhat less mobile variants of clothing. Walls, floors, ceilings, furniture will all automatically clean and repair themselves, and will all be able to change at their owners' slightest whim. Get bored with your colour scheme nowadays and you have to go out, spend a lot of money, stagger back home with a lot of tins of paint and rolls of wallpaper, and spend a lot of time and effort stripping off the old and putting on the new. With nano-technology, you'll be able to give a single command to some central domestic control unit, and everything will change right in front of you without your having to move another finger. And if you don't like it, you can change back again, or try something else. Interior decorating, like fashion in general, is going to change in a huge number of ways. Life as a whole is going to change in a huge number of ways.

And so are we, literally, because we won't just be using nano-technology on the world around us, but also on ourselves. Nano-medicine is not only going to provide cures for tooth decay, the common cold, and cancer, it's also going to alter the very structure of our bodies. Nano-machines are going to roam us from head to toe, inside and out, carrying out on-the-spot repairs, fighting off viral and bacterial intruders and, inevitably, making improvements on what Mother Nature has already provided us with. Bone is a marvelously



light and sturdy substance, but it could be made lighter and sturdier. Our lungs are marvellously efficient suppliers of oxygen and removers of carbon dioxide, but they could achieve more with less effort. They could achieve things that are now impossible, such as enabling us to breath underwater or in the poisonous or oxygen-starved atmospheres of other planets. Think of a body part, and nano-machines are going to be able to change it for the better. Or for the worse, because the brain is also a body-part.

In this case size is going to matter a lot, because the best skull-fucking is only going to be achieved by devices small enough to get inside the head and alter what's there directly. Once we understand exactly how memory works, nano-technology is going to give us the ability to change it. Or rather, give them the ability, and by "them" I mean the governments and powerful organisations of the world. Control memory, and to a large extent you control thought. Perhaps you control thought completely: our opinions and beliefs are all based on our experiences, and we keep in touch with our experiences using memory. If even the interior of our skulls is no longer beyond the reach of those who might wish to control us, what limits can be set to the potential power of the state or its organs? Very few, and although it may be trite to say so, it's nonetheless true that if history teaches us anything, it is that power will be abused as soon as it becomes available.

Perhaps this doesn't sound very frightening. If so, I haven't stressed the nature of nano-technology enough. It's very difficult to imagine how ordinary people will be able to defend themselves against it. Nano-skull-fuckers would possess all the advantages of chemical and bacteriological warfare, plus some special advantages of their own. They could be sprayed into the air, poured in water supplies, mixed into food, built into clothing, buildings and transport. They would be everywhere, and nano-factories able to be comfortably accommodated on the head of a pin could work non-stop to replace them as they became worn-out or were rendered obsolescent by changes in policy or ideology. Unlike poison gas or bacteria, they would have intelligence and be able to make independent choices. Land-mines have already been developed that can distinguish between human and animal footsteps, or count the number of people passing over them and decide for themselves whether or not to explode. Nano-machines will have far greater computing power at their disposal: they will, in effect, be far smarter than anything the body could put up against them. A virus or bacterium usually meets its match in a white blood cell; there would be no reason to suppose that nano-machines would be vulnerable in the same way, even if they were not made — as they certainly will be — from substances far stronger and more durable than the soft and short-lived cytoplasm of human cells. The only thing a nano-machine will be vulnerable to is another nano-machine. One wouldn't expect governments to put much effort into hunter-killer nano-technology because, after all, the target of their nano-skull-fuckers will be their own civilian populations. It will be developed, nonetheless, for the simple and obvious reason that the target will also be the civilian populations of other countries.

Imagine, for example, an Iranian nano-skull-fucker programmed to enter the brain of an unsuspecting individual and alter his memories and thought processes in such a way as to turn him into a good Shi'ite, if he isn't one already. Why on the earth would the

Iranian government confine the use of a such a skull-fucker to the Sunnis, Baha'is, Christians and other assorted infidels within their national borders? They wouldn't. Neither would, *mutatis mutandis*, any other totalitarian government — and under that heading I would certainly include America and most of the other governments in the West. And it won't simply be governments: it will also be we-know-what's-best-for-you organisations of every kind, so long as they are able to afford to develop and deploy nano-skull-fuckers of their own. It may be that a single government or organisation is going to develop this kind of technology soon enough and employ it effectively enough to catch everyone else napping, but far more likely than a world in which everyone owes allegiance to the Rev. Sun Myung Moon or the Universal Goddess or Adolf Hitler seems to be a world in which nano-skull-fuckers are going to be competing for skull-space with other nano-skull-fuckers. If so, they are going to have to fight against each other. The winner of the arms race that will develop is going to have the hearts and minds of the entire human race.

Of course, there may be no winner and the potential of nano-skull-fuckers may be less than I have imagined here. Perhaps they will be little more than a nuisance, rather like colds and 'flu epidemics nowadays. Perhaps in the future people will come down with Ayatollah fever or Moonie 'flu, and a "bad case of the trots" will mean something quite different. Perhaps opinions will become nothing more than fashion items, and Saki's words will become literally realisable:

The fashion just now is a Roman Catholic frame of mind with an Agnostic conscience: you get the medieval picturesqueness of the one with the modern conveniences of the other.

['Reginald at the Theatre', in *The Complete Short Stories of Saki*, H.H. Munro]

On the other hand, just as some diseases today are nothing more than a nuisance and some are deadly, perhaps nano-skull-fuckers will come in both benign and malevolent forms. The best analogy may be with computer viruses: all are potentially damaging, but not all of them are designed to trash your hard drive and put up gloating messages informing you of the fact. I once knew a woman who was wary of computers because she didn't want to catch one of them computer viruses; in the future, she might have good cause for her wariness, particularly if the boundaries between electronic and organic intelligence become blurred by some future generation of computer. If we want computers that are able to think like us, we may have to build computers that work like us. We will almost certainly, sooner or later, be incorporating computers into our brains: in either case, part of the distinction between human and computer viruses may become obsolete, and nano-skull-fuckers may not discriminate between the two of us either.

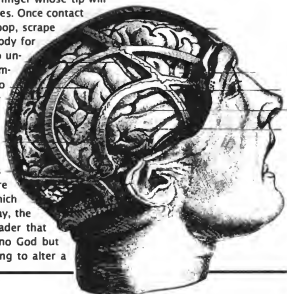
This may strike some people as reminiscent of the possible dangers of genetic engineering and, yes, in a number of important ways nano-technology and genetic engineering are very similar. Both work on a very small scale, both are potentially impossible to control, and both are going to be exploited by people who have only their own best interests at heart — and perhaps not a very good under-

standing even of that. Nano-technology is, however, by far the more dangerous of the two. If the biological sciences can be characterised as playing cards with Mother Nature, genetic engineering gives us the ability to shuffle the cards we're given and come up with new hands; nano-technology gives us the ability to make entirely new cards, even to start playing entirely new games.

Genetic engineering, for example, has produced a pest-control virus that uses scorpion genes to produce a more powerful insect-killing toxin. It will be a trivial problem for nano-technology to produce something equivalent, and there is, furthermore, no easily imaginable way that genetic manipulation could produce viruses or bacteria capable of altering the mind in any finely detailed way: that may be entirely the province of nano-technology. Then again, there is no reason why the two forms of technology should not work together in a war waged against the mind. Or rather the brain. But that's the same thing, isn't it?

As I've already said, I think it is. The central assumption made in this look at skull-fucking is that the mind — beliefs, thoughts, acts of will (and so the actions mediated by and underlying these things) — rests on the physical functioning of the brain, and that alteration of the brain's physical functioning will therefore produce some alteration in the mind. Frontal lobotomies are based on this assumption, and frontal lobotomies demonstrate that it is a valid one, but even the most refined psychosurgical techniques use crude macro-technology based on the naked eye and the hands. Nano-technology offers the opportunity to manipulate the brain at the molecular level, with a corresponding increase in the subtlety and scope of the changes affected in the mind. Two questions arise from this. First that of precisely how such things as memory and beliefs are stored in the brain's structure, and second that of whether it will be possible to alter them by manipulating the brain in the way suggested in this article.

A widely suggested use for medical nano-technology provides a comparison for the possible difficulty of such brain manipulation. One day, it's suggested, our circulatory system will be patrolled by fleets of nano-submarines programmed to search out and destroy deposits of fat on the walls of veins and arteries. Each nano-sub will be equipped with something like a mechanical finger whose tip will be designed to react to contact with fat molecules. Once contact is made, the sub will then deploy a claw or scoop, scrape the deposit away and store it inside its own body for breaking-down or disposal elsewhere. Simple to understand, simple to imagine in operation. Compare now the case of a nano-sub programmed to hunt down and destroy or alter memories or beliefs. There is certainly more than one kind of molecule involved in the storage of these things in the brain, and they are also very likely both to be stored individually in very complex ways and to be interlinked with other memories and beliefs in very complex ways. That is, there will be no simple single point in the brain at which it will be possible to come into contact with, say, the memory of a political speech by a glorious leader that proved to be false or the belief that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet. Attempting to alter a



single memory or belief may be rather like attempting to remove a single thread from a tapestry: either impossible, or pointless, because the overall pattern will be almost unaffected. The attempt to remove the thread from the tapestry, moreover, will be made actually inside the tapestry, and the thread to be recognised will be far larger than the machine that has the task of recognising it.

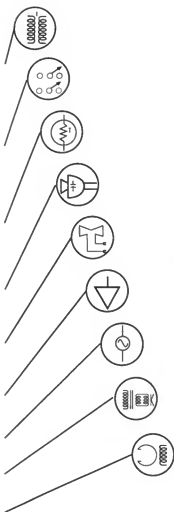
The brain also has natural defences against the degradation and destruction of its memories and, like all well-designed libraries and news agencies, doesn't keep single copies of anything. It's interesting to speculate what might happen if a "single" belief or system of beliefs stored over a relatively large region of the brain starts to contradict itself as nano-skull-fuckers get to work on it. The analogy here might be that of a peace treaty between two countries. One country starts to alter the wording of its copies of the treaty; sooner or later the second country will notice, make strenuous objections, and possibly declare war. What is the equivalent of war inside the brain? A headache? Mental breakdown?

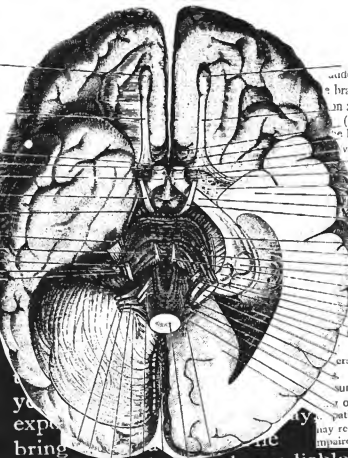
Then again, it's entirely possible that this is a natural state of affairs for the brain. Nobody's beliefs are entirely consistent, and a significant part of what underlies beliefs and actions is subconscious anyway. A better analogy may not be that of threads in a tapestry but that of a reservoir supplying drinking-water to a town. If you want to drug everyone in the town, you could go around trying to slip the drug into their mid-morning coffee or bedtime cocoa, or you could go and put the drug in the reservoir. Small changes may have large effects, and the brain may begin to do the work for you if you change just a few things at a sufficiently fundamental level.

The biggest problem seems to me, however, to be that of information, using the word in its technical, scientific sense. Computers store information in the form of on-or-off pulses of electricity; brains store information in forms that nobody quite understands yet. The nano-skull-fuckers will have to be very small in order to get inside the skull and start re-decorating the interior, but because they are very small they won't be able to carry very much information with them in the form of pattern-recognition and pattern-alteration programs. In other words, they may not be intelligent enough to recognise the patterns they need to recognise or, if they are able to do that, intelligent enough to do anything more than destroy them. Imagine, for example, the task of designing a computer virus to seek out copies of the Bible and destroy them. That would be relatively easy: all it would have to look for is a text containing a certain style of language and repetition of certain words and phrases, and then delete it. If a text contains references to God, Moses, and Jesus, uses "thee" and "thou" a lot, and is several hundred thousand words long, it would be a safe bet that it was the Bible — or the King James version of it, at least. You could probably achieve pretty satisfactory results with a hunter-killer virus that does no more than check the size of a file and look at the file name for the string "BiBL".

Imagine now the task of programming a computer virus to seek out copies of the Bible and *re-write* them. The virus has to be small, or it won't be able to conceal itself as it slips from disk to hard-drive to disk, but if it's small, how can it be programmed with the ability to re-write something as complex as the Bible? Either the changes it can make will be trivial, or it won't be able to make the changes at all.

Of course, the differences between a static, inanimate system of information like the Bible and a dynamic, animate system of informa-





It is a loss of consciousness caused by a sudden interruption of the normal circulation of the brain. There are three causes of this condition: (1) the bursting of a blood-vessel in the brain; (2) the blocking of a blood-vessel in the brain by a clot or a fragment of a diseased valve; (3) the gradual formation of an aneurysm in an artery of the brain usually occurring in a person whose arteries are degenerated. This deprives a certain area of the brain of its supply of blood.

The onset of symptoms is very sudden and without warning. In the common form the onset is sudden, but there may have been previous symptoms such as dizziness, headache, numbness of an upper or a lower limb.

The following refers to brain stroke.

The condition is more frequent in men than in women, and is unusual before middle age. The conditions favouring cerebral stroke are chronic kidney disease and high blood pressure.

Violent exertion, mental excitement, exposure to great heat may, in such a subject, lead to an attack. The attack may be fatal, but the patient, though always liable to a fresh attack, may recover with one side of the body paralysed, impaired speech and an exaggeration of the other.

the patient, though always liable to a fresh attack, may recover with one side of the body paralysed,

tion like the brain are obvious, and these differences seem more likely to increase the difficulty of the proposed task than decrease them. One way of getting around them may be to divide the task of skull-fucking between hundreds or thousands of different types of nano-machine, each type applying its own special expertise and programming. Another may be to devise some means of communicating with the skull-fuckers once they are actually inside the skull. The task of recognising the electrochemical patterns underlying memories and beliefs will probably be far easier than the task of altering them, particularly if the skull-fucker is able to devote almost all of its onboard memory and processing power to it, and then draw on outside help when alteration begins. An analogy here might be with an Australian flying doctor sufficiently qualified both to recognise a brain tumour when he sees one and to follow the instructions of a proper brain-surgeon over a radio or television link for the operation itself, though not sufficiently qualified to perform the operation on his own.

The skull-fucker, then, would be able to recognise a particular memory and then be guided by signals beamed into the skull in its alteration of that memory. The signals could take several forms, and the fact that the skull-fucker was far smaller than the wavelength of radio or sound waves would not necessarily be important. Micro-

waves, for example, can actually produce resonance effects in the water content of the brain, and are sometimes responsible for reports of curious sub-sonic thumpings and dronings heard in towns and cities. Skull-fuckers could presumably detect these effects inside the brain: whether or not this kind of signal channel could pass information in sufficient quantity or of sufficient quality and speed to enable the brain manipulation being discussed here i am unqualified to judge, but micro-waves are not the only possibility for this kind of outside help. Perhaps the brain's own sources of information from the outside world could be exploited, and skull-fuckers will be able to hook up directly to the optic or auditory nerves to read messages placed there by governments in seemingly innocuous television and radio broadcasts. Far more information gets into the brain through the sense organs than we are consciously aware of, and its quality and quantity are far in excess of anything present-day computers are able to produce or cope with.

The advantages of this kind of outside control are obvious, and if skull-fuckers of this kind are ever created and used, governments will be able to "re-program" their populations at will as policy and ideology changes. If so, even the worst nightmares of contemporary paranoiacs will seem relatively trivial by comparison. Today, so some people say, there are devices out there capable of beaming messages into your brain that change the way you think, feel and act. Tomorrow, perhaps they won't just be outside beaming in, they'll be inside too, and they'll be able to alter your brain so subtly and thoroughly that you may never realise what's happening to you. If the CIA or Mossad or Opus Dei or the Freemasons are so good at mind-control, I always wonder how anybody ever gets to hear about it. Tomorrow perhaps nobody will, because they will be.



APPENDIX Andrea Dworkin's "Skull Fucking"

As i found when I returned to **Letters from a War-Zone** to check what I had written about it, the second paragraph of the above article actually presents a highly distorted account of Dworkin's appearance in New York at the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, January 22, 1986. In fact, part of it is entirely wrong. I've let it stand, however, both because I rather like it and because it's a good example of the way Dworkin is misrepresented by her opponents. She is a dangerous woman, but she is not the rabid, hysterically pro-censorship femi-nazi of popular anti-censorship myth (though she may well be loved to people of whom that is a pretty good description). On the contrary, Dworkin seems to be a gentle, intelligent and sensitive woman and I've found to my chagrin that although I had realised this myself from what I've read of her work, I was simultaneously writing and thinking about her in the distorted way I had absorbed by a kind of underground osmosis. As i've said, the second paragraph of this article is a good example of this; so are the closing paragraphs of my article 'Below the Belt' in the Headpress compilation **Critical Vision**.

Here, then, is a copy of the relevant section from Dworkin's evidence to the hearing. Quite clearly she is dangerously deluded; equally clearly I have misrepresented her. My apologies, Andrea. The stage is now yours:

MS TILTON Let me also ask Dr Dietz's question. You mentioned that there are snuff movies. Have you seen them? Can you give us more information?

MS BWORKIN I will give you the information that i can give you on them.

No, i have never seen them. i hope never to. We know of a conviction in California; it's the Douglas and Hernandez case of two men who were making a snuff film. Of course they were convicted for murder. They had tried to make a snuff film previously and had, in quotes, been "entrapped" by a female police officer.

They were then let go and then they tried again and succeeded in committing a murder and filming it.

We have information that right now snuff films are selling in the Las Vegas area — a print costs \$2500 to \$3000 — and [in] some places are being screened for \$250 a seat.

We have information from prostitutes in one part of the country that they are being forced to watch snuff films before then being forced to engage in heavily sadomasochistic acts. They are terrified.

We have information on the survivalist in from Calaveras County, the man who kept all those women as slaves and filmed his torture and killing of them and made films of that.

We have information on something, and i hope you will excuse me but i will just simply use the language, called skull fucking, which apparently was brought back from Viet Nam [sic], and those are films in which a woman was killed and the orifices in her head are penetrated with a man's penis, her eyes and her mouth and so on.

The information comes from women who have seen the films and escaped.

One of the problems that we have in communicating with law-enforcement people is we always get the information first, whether it's about rape or murder or anything else. We are seldom believed. We are afraid of exposing women who are already in enough jeopardy to a male legal system that will not give them either credibility or protection, so we have a great deal of evidence that would not hold up in the sphere of social policy as evidence. And I suppose until we can bring you a film, you will not believe that it exists.

MS TILTON Along with that, do you want to ask a question now?

DR DIETZ i just want to say that the Commission is aware of cases in which offenders for their own purposes have made such things, and that it may be the case in California that they have the notion that there might be some commercial merit to what they were doing. But so far, every example that's been offered of what was believed to be a snuff film, has been a Hollywood creation.

MS BWORKIN No, no, there's been one Hollywood creation.

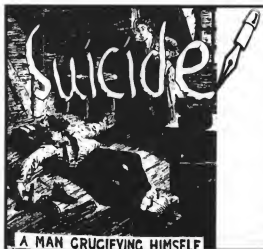


DR DIETZ Hollywood's film **Snuff**, the George C. Scott film and, of course, many X-rated things could be considered that if anyone actually died. But Hollywood, so far as we've heard, is the source of that notion. Now, life may be beginning to imitate art and it would be very valuable if we can learn of anything that truly does exist, especially if it predates the Hollywood—

MS DWORKIN The initial public information about snuff films was made by a policeman in 1975, before the fraudulent snuff film was distributed on the market, and he said that the films were being imported from South America. It was because of the newspaper coverage of his testimony, as I understand it — and I have done some investigating of it — that the wonderful person who made and distributed the fraudulent snuff film got the idea to do it. He simply capitalised on what he had read about it in the newspapers and took what had been an old film and put a new ending on it that resembled the film that he had read about.

But the original information was from the police, and I think that getting — I understand that nobody yet has found and has a copy. I understand the Justice Department tried. My information comes from a journalist, whose sources I trust, that such films exist, from women who have seen them, whom I believe, whom no law-enforcement official would, that the films exist, that they have seen them. And so far, all that I could tell you is that it doesn't mean we mayn't be wrong, but so far we have said that battery exists and the FBI has said it doesn't, and we have been right. And we've said that rape exists and law-enforcement people have said, no; and we've been right. And we said incest is rife in this country and law-enforcement people first said no, and we were right. Our big secret is that we listen to the people to whom it happens. And that's what we're doing here.

Extract from Andrea Dworkin's evidence to the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, January 22, 1986, New York (pgs. 303-305, **Letters from a War-Zone**, Martin Secker & Warburg, London, 1988). ■



HEADPRESS 14

THAT'S RIGHT. NEXT TIME AROUND IT'S THE 'SUICIDE SPECIAL' ISSUE, AND WE'RE LOOKING FOR CONTRIBUTIONS. NEWS CLIPPINGS, PHOTOS, STRANGE STORIES ABOUT YOUR AUNTIE, AUTO-EROTICA, RELIGIOUS DELUSION, ANYTHING THAT COMES CLOSE TO STICKING IT TO THE SAVAGE GOD AND WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

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Email: davidk@hpress.u-net.com

Phil Tonge's CAK-WATCH!

TRACES OF DEATH 3

"Dead Alive" Productions, 1994



For those of you unfamiliar with the **Traces of Death** video series, let us recap. Various drooling cabbages with the collective IQ of a water biscuit, decided it would be peachy-keen to bang out hack-videos based on ripping-off existing Mondo movies, news footage vids, TV 'reality' shows, etc. Packages with a fatuous voice-over by the titular 'producer', a Mr Brain Damage (not his real name) and a dubbed-on Speed/Death Metal soundtrack, the **TOD** series was released into the community. Got that? Good, there's more.

The metalheads in charge also decided that popping in adverts for their mail-order merchandise company (selling all manner of muck and tat) right in the middle of their videos would be swell and not remotely tacky.

So, **Traces of Death 3 [TOD]**, where do we begin? Obviously enough at the beginning. After a vid-printer message of "Extreme Warning" up scrolls this dainty announcement:

This film is meant for the true "reality death enthusiast". In the tradition of **TRACES OF DEATH 1** [their caps] absolutely NONE of the footage contained in this film is recreated in any way, which makes the **TRACES OF DEATH** series the first "TRUE SHOCKUMENTARIES" ever released!!!

And on it goes...

The material contained in this videotape IS EXPLICITLY GRAPHIC and is NOT for CHILDREN or the SQUEAMISH of any kind. FROM THIS POINT FORWARD, view at your own risk! We are serious!!

On reflection, this whole statement, down to dodgy grammar and about five exclamation marks too many, conjures up the sort of sign teenagers like to put on their bedroom doors. "PARENTS + GROWN-UPS — KEEP OUT!!! By Order! Or else!!" etc.

I also love that bit about "no faked footage", that really is taking the piss. You can just see in your mind's eye, a ripped-off

WAY-OUT YOUTH... SEARCHING FOR A WAY OUT!

MARSHALL NAIFY
PRESENTS

Malamondo

EastmanCOLOR Released by MAGNA PICTURES DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION



adolescent realising he's shelled out his hard cash for the bogus 'Amazon massacre' scene from **Savage Man... Savage Beast**, and feeling like a complete prat in the bargain.

Up pops the 'Dead Alive' Productions logo complete with crap heavy breathing (ooh, I'm scared) then crash, bang, boredom! **TOD 3** begins. It instantly becomes clear that the foul little mercenaries who paper and paste these things together have been raking it in — gone is the tuppence ha'penny voice-over heard in **TOD #1** and **2**.

Wad in hand, our semi-evolved producers have legged it down to the Yank equivalent of Radio Rentals, blagged a bottom of the range Camcorder, piled into the shed and shot some actual original footage. Unfortunately, this amounts to the 'producer' Brain Damage standing in a darkened shed with some 'spooky' candles.

At first you think he's facing the camera, and by some clever lighting, kept his face in the shadows. However it suddenly dawns on the viewer that Mr Damage has his back to the camera and is wildly emoting his lines to some hot dribbly wax. Now, this strange set-up is because (a) he's scared a 'spooky candle' will set alight to his girlie long hair, (b) the camera operator is so liberated from talent he hasn't a clue how to light it, or (c) Mr Damage is on his own and has no friends.

It probably wouldn't have been so bad if Senör Damage had put his hat on the right way round, but you can't have everything. Actually, the baseball cap facing us and girlie locks of Brain, makes it look like we're watching a man with a magnificent beard.

If this opening shot wasn't ridiculous enough, the director (which I suppose was whoever got to the camera first) follows it with a plum close-up of the producer's elbows, which are resplendent with felt-tip pen tattoos: "Brain" on the right and "Damage" on the left.

This, to me, is a moment of high comedy and it was a while before I could continue. (Laugh? I thought they'd never dry.) I hope they were trying to be funny, I really do, even though it's obvious that Irony and Camp are not on the menu at Chez Damage, the po-faced gits.

After Mr Damage's comedy turn we are thrown immediately into a trough full of corpse-meat with no sign of escape. A full synopsis of all the clips would fill a page, but here's a few worth mentioning. **TOD 3** follows the same formula as the other entries, endless ripped-off news footage of endless civil wars and totally shameless stealing of yards of footage from Mondos such as **Faces**



GREATEST SHOCK SCENE EVER FILMED!



**AFTER
MEIN
KAMPF**



AD 102

GREATEST SHOCK SCENE EVER FILMED!



THE REAL
UNCENSORED
TREATMENT OF
HITLER'S HOLY!

**AFTER
MEIN
KAMPF**

GRIN AND FOR SCIENTIFIC
EXPERIMENTS WITH DEAD
REMEMBERS OF WAR!



THEATRE

AD 101

of **Death 4**, **Savage Man... Savage Beast**, **Last Savage Part 2** (aka **Shocking Africa**), **The Shocks**, **Savage Zone**, **Mondo Magic**, you name it. Even **True Gore**, that other product of the VCR age gets mugged for its 'best bits'. In fact, the rather pompous and dodgy **True Gore** looks like a triumph of humanism compared to the clod-hopping dollar-grabbing shits who make up the **Traces of Death** series.

Atrocities flicker past as the tape unwinds; Rwanda, Sarajevo, South Africa, Algeria — a shopping list of human sufferings. Then lo and behold! We're treated to animal fatalities: cockfighting, bullfighting, Japanese fishermen getting out of sorts with some dolphins... On it spools, more mangled bodies in more undignified displays of mortality: crushed heads, broken limbs, endless pools of blood and shit, endlessly scooped onto endless gurneys, endless queues of ambulances, endless mortuary slabs. Drive-by shootings, dead gang members, bullet wounds **THIS BIG**, fatal shootings in the face, in the eye, on and on and on and we're not even halfway there.

Now is a good time to mention the soundtrack. Accompanying every stiff cadaver and every bloated corpse rumbles that mighty pillar of the music world: US Death Metal. Oh joy.

If banality was a sound, this would be it. You've got two choices of track on **TOD 3**: Death and Metal. The only difference in the 'songs' I can hear are the vocals. There are two distinct types. One is the skinny torso-oller who really would love to be that ginger tart in Metallica; the other is the rumbling throat demon, ranting slurred rubbish that could be anything, with what sounds like the entire contents of a sock-drawer in his throat. The Honey Monster gone bad if you like, emitting low moans and generally irritating the bejesus out of everyone.

Why, with this challenging soundtrack and these respectful visuals, life really has slowed to a fucking crawl.



And so we trawl ever deeper. Blokes falling off motor-bikes, crashing Formula One cars, dragsters, indy 5000, monster trucks, suddenly we're in **Wacky Races**, so we swing back to massacres and homicides, ossaries in Kampuchea, and those bloody horrible scenes of circumcision from **Last Savage Part 2**. Some Arabs carve up a camel for tea and then we get the (faked) 'Indian massacre' scene from **Savage Man... Savage Beast**, only minus the introductory captions. Thing is, we get Brain Damage's voice-over drooling: "**Traces of Death 3** is proud to bring you the exclusive footage of the El Salvador death squads at their best." What a twat. If Brain Damage could spell El Salvador and point to it on a map then maybe, just maybe, I might piss on him if he was on fire.

As it is, this man is a chocolate starfish of gargantuan proportions. If this man has opposable thumbs, I will eat my fucking boots.

We reach — thank the heavens — the climax of the tape with Mr Damage back in the shed of doom giving a verbal thank you to all involved. He then plugs his wretched mail order business and the 'Dead Alive Productions' fan club (!) before pissing off (and probably falling over the lawnmower).

More tedious ads follow for T-shirts, CD soundtracks for **TOD 3** and **Sounds of Death** magazine, etc. etc. and that's yer lot.

What can I say? Are the **Traces of Death** videos just reflections of a crap-metal sub-culture? Are these the children of Beavis

and Butthead wanking off to corpse meat vids? Why haven't they killed themselves with shotguns like they're supposed to?

Dead Alive Productions really deserve a righteous kicking for putting this shite out. Not only because of all the shameless lies about content or the petty pilfering of other peoples' work (Mondo or not there's still a copyright issue here!). Nor is it the amoral presentation with the sick jokes and the cheesy packaging values. It isn't just objectionable because of the pandering to this great heavy metal myth about just how damn clever, hard core and scary they are. Well, all right, I lied. There is a lot about that I just don't like. Death Metal? Scary? Don't make me laugh, sonny. Just piss off or I'll spank you and confiscate your skateboard. What is it about these cretins? Look at that scene, look at the bands! They might be Rock icons in the States, but bring 'em over here and Danny LaRue will have 'em sued for nicking his act!

Nah, the thing that really stinks about **TOD** is the fact that it's being marketed by these tossers as something 'naughty' when really it's dire, depressing, dehumanising and something else that begins with 'd'. It isn't 'naughty', it's a shameless cynical capitalist marketing con-job and it smells. Poo.

George Orwell, in his novel, **Nineteen Eighty-Four**, had a scene in which Winston Smith is being tortured by party big-wig O'Brien. "If you want a picture of the future," says O'Brien, "imagine a boot stamping on a human face — for ever."

I say, "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a spotty greb poltroon dubbing off copies of **Traces of Death** — for ever."

Now, that /s scary. ■

A WEIRO WORLD OF BIZARRE PRACTICES



Witchcraft
'70
EXPOSED
thru the eye of the
HIDDEN CAMERA!

UNWANTED



GOD TOLD ME TO!

**KILLER, KUNG FU, KICKING,
KAMIKAZE GRANNIES!**



**Mission: TO WASH ALL
SCUM OFF THE STREETS**

**BEST TO TAKE NO RISKS
SHOOT HER NOW!**

Note: Some of the claims made in this advertisement may be of a false nature, the filmmakers hold no responsibility for these untruths.

REPUBLIC

a mainstream film.
43 minutes on another planet.

REPUBLIC is a truly alarming documentation of people whose lives are so downright, mind-boggling wrong...

Witness with slack jaw the dancing fool; marvel at the misbegotten ranting of the market stall person; gape in horror at the abject antics of the apparently lobotomised frustrated TV youth show presenter...

REPUBLIC is an eruption of volcanic bile characterising wasted years, wasted brain cells, & wasted lives...

Nauseatingly compulsive viewing — wallow in it...

STEFAN JAWORZYN
Shock Xpress

Twin Peaks with outside lavatories...

PAINT IT RED

...a quite extraordinary spectacle, exposing with mind-bending frequency the quirks of everyday madness.

HEADPRESS

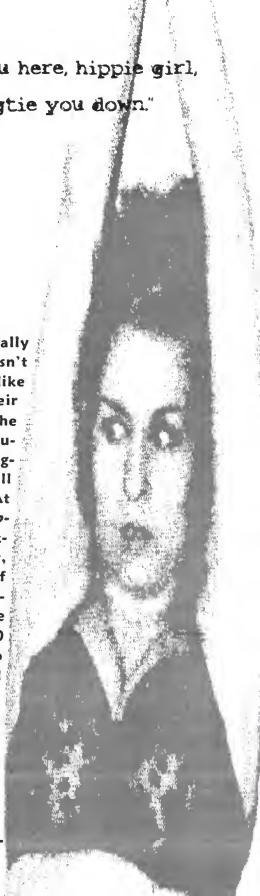
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"I'm going to keep you here, hippie girl,
even if I have to hogtie you down."

BONDAGE HIPPIES

DAVID KERESKES

There is something morally wrong with anyone who isn't drawn to a title like **Bondage Hippies**. Who in their right mind could fail to smirk at the prospect of hippie chicks being subjugated by The Man? Stinkin' dirty long-hairs and their Rock festivals, all trussed up on the B-road of life. At least that's what I was expecting, *hoping*, from the battered little A5 booklet before me. Naturally, however, being a smut publication of yesteryear, its promises were somewhat over-inflated. Not a single one of the photos contained therein — 40 of them, all "beautiful" according to the blurb on the jacket — featured what could be comfortably termed a 'hippie', not by the loosest definition of the word. But then, 'Housewives in Archaic Underwear and a Length of Rope' wouldn't have the same snap to it.



Bondage Hippies is a 60-page illustrated story published by E.W.I. & C.I.P. of London, who also included in their publishing schedule the **Candid Invitation** contact mag and the six-part **Discipline Manor**. There is no date on the thing, but it's a safe bet that **Bondage Hippies** originates from late-Sixties/early-Seventies America and that E.W.I. & C.I.P. picked it up for release in the UK soon after. The B/W photos are rather garish and obvious 'lifts'. They're also very tame, with no exhibition of bare breasts or genitalia and certainly no scenes of fucking. Likewise, there is no blatant sexual interaction in the story itself, and the foulest the language ever gets is "bum" and "breasts". If not for the grubbiness of its presentation, **Bondage Hippies** could almost be described as 'quaint'.

And that, dear reader, would be the end word on **Bondage Hippies** but for one underlying aspect of the story in question. It's written by Richard Brautigan! It's written by Jack Kerouac! It's written by William Burroughs! It's written by Allen Ginsberg! Well, okay, not them in actuality, but them in spirit — someone so hopelessly immersed in beatific writing, and so hopelessly out of tune with it, that the whole shebang is compelling reading from beginning to hackneyed end.

Sally Simms is a little jealous of her hippie room mate, Anne Palmer — lots of friends and always going out. When Anne calls Sally a "square", refusing to stay home one evening and rearrange the furniture (?), Sally flips. Sally gets *'angry enough to turn this hippie girl over on her tummy and whack her bottom cheeks until they stung like a hornet's nest'*. And that's the story. Permutations on the being-tied-up-and-spanked theme, with Anne being punished and then deciding to get her own back on Sally with the aid of her hippie friend, Suzette Duclos. Later still, the tables are turned again as Sally gets Suzette alone and teaches *her* a lesson in humility. Anne's boyfriend Vince Monroe is brought into the fray for the big bondage finale and, being a 'typical love-indoctrinated hippie', is unable to fend off the girls and has to submit to a beating by all three.

As if to make up for the distinct lack of pictorial hippie evidence, the anonymous author constantly refers to the hippie nature of the principal characters. With all the subtlety of a toffee hammer to the back of the head, each and every page tosses in several allusions to hippie-ness and hippie-dom. On page two, for instance, when Sally tells Anne that they ought to spend the night rearranging the furniture, her room mate responds thus:

"Honestly, you're really part of the Establishment, know what I mean? You dig me, baby?"

Here, Anne is said to be 'affecting hippie jargon'. A few lines later, when Sally pushes the girl over and kneels on top of her, Anne begins 'to spout the typical hippie philosophy':

"Stop! Stop! You can't do that to me!... I'm free — I belong to Nature... I want love."

But Sally wants to whack some sense into Anne's hippie bottom, so that "In a mini-skirt, when you go off to some discotheque, you can

"At last - a
hippie
is begging
for mercy."



show off your red-spanked bottom as you dance."

And being bound is 'tantamount to an LSD trip into euphoria'.

But perhaps the ultimate overkill comes with Anne and Suzette's Zen Buddhist session. Listening to a Yoga record (which calls for Suzette to meditate in a pair of low-cut wispy black lace panties, from which her 'dimpled navel peeped in wild abandon-ment'), sitting cross-legged and chanting, Sally bursts into the room and tells the girls to keep the noise down. When Sally inadvertently smashes the record, all hell breaks loose. With a length clothesline secreted in the pocket of the record album, the girl is bound.

Now the ankles were spread-eagled, the thighs yawned and the weeping Sally Simms (oh yes, the once-proud, imperious scorner of hippies was weeping like a humiliated slave in bondage) was begging for mercy!

When Anne has had enough of seeing her flat mate punished, she tells Suzette that they ought to get back to their Zen Buddhist lesson, but because the record is broken, "Why don't we do a twist dance?"

Don't for a minute think that the readership for this nonsense was actually the free-loving society. I like to think that the only people getting their jollies out of **Bondage Hippies** were the cops who caved in a few hippie heads at Attica, and straight-laced Mr Establishment, outwardly spurning the permissive society, totally clueless but taken by its chicks nonetheless.

Despite the fact that all the characters are bound and beaten against their will, apart from a couple of incidents in the subjugation of Sally Simms (in which Sally is half-throttled to death, then punched so hard Suzette's fist almost passes right through her), **Bondage Hippies** is tame in a hopeless fetish kind of way. Like the addled Speed addict who insists "I can handle it" at every turn, the author here reiterates how therapeutic and downright *helpful* lots of bondage can be. Indeed, at the end of the story the three major characters have undergone a drastic personality change for the better because of bondage: Anne has become disillusioned with the hippies, Suzette decides that the love philosophy of the hippies is good, but she isn't going to get spanked and punished for it, and Sally — tool of the Establishment — goes to the park 'be in' and becomes a hippie when she discovers their emphasis is on female superiority (?). 'And that is exactly what a little bondage session can do,' is the book's closing statement, 'it can bring out the most unexpected in all of us.'

It goes without saying that the writing in **Bondage Hippies** should be riddled with grammatical inconsistencies and spelling mistakes, but the choice of wording is often delicious and the syntax inspired. There is also a lot of free-flowing word-association stuff — too much of it and too

off-kilter to be a complete accident. Here, to close, are a few choice morsels:

❑ "Your stupid bearded boy friend," sputtered Sally as she now gave an extra yank to the ropes, forcing the trussed Anne into a humiliating position of abject penury, "had better watch out!"

❑ "Do you promise?" Sally was weakening. But she wanted to bask in her imperious glory. "Or do you want *this*, together with the ropes!" Her palm became flat. There was a blur. A sharp crack echoed in the room. Anne screamed as the hard-as-a-leather-razor-stop palm whacked her distended backside. It hurt! A sharp sting reverberated until her rear thigh buttock was burning red with hot needles stinging all the way into her tendermost parts.

❑ "What now?" she murmured, still sucking in precious air, feeling drenched so that her bra and undies were almost transparent, clinging to her big-breasted and flaring-hipped figure like a second skin. "Don't punish me! I'll let the two of you do whatever you want, but don't punish me." Already, the bondage sessions was beginning to bear fruit, so to speak.

❑ Her bruised lips were parched. She could hardly move her tongue. It felt like a thick leather glob in her equally parched mouth.

❑ "Are you going to get with the scene, you square!" commanded Suzette. "Tell us that you're a square!"

❑ Despite her bound position, the near-naked Sally Simms retained her stubborn streak. She had to swallow a few times before her parched throat

Suzette Duclos, a long-haired blonde waitress who served tables at a local hippie coffee house that also showed underground films to a discerning audience."



regained the ability to create words. "No... I don't want to get with you stupid hippies. You're lazy, shiftless... all of you. I oughta call my boy friend... and he'll really punish you."

"What's that? You call us stupid! We're soul searchers. We believe in love. We believe in flowers and peace. We want everyone to take trips on LSD and you call us stupid! I'm going to make you eat your words!"

☐ "Right!" Anne Palmer was only too eager to accommodate. She had always looked up to Suzette with a strange sort of sightless devotion. It was typical of neophyte hippies such as Anne to regard the more experienced lovers of life as Suzette with almost worshipful devotion bordering on abject humility.

"Yeah... we'll punch her... right in the belly."

☐ "And I think you need a little lesson in old-fashioned discipline." With that, she slipped out of her house coat, standing naked except for a pair of peek-a-boo panties that outlined the dimpled swells of her saucy buttocks... The bra raised her milky mounds, bringing them tightly together so that the dividing valley was as thin as a hairline. Each breath caused the twin breast goodies to joggle up and down. She advanced slowly.

☐ "You're going to get it now... hippie!" Scurrying quickly, Sally grabbed the stunned Suzette, seized her tent style dress, yanked it over her head. "Ahhhhhhh... you've got on your undies and bra. Too bad. Thought you'd be in your skin — then I'd be able to flay you alive!"

And my own personal favourite:

☐ She had become so perspired from the exertion, her scanties were moist, plastered to her well-shaped bottom, while her bra held up her twin upper mounds with a near-transparent reaction.

Yes, you read correctly — moist scanties, twin upper mounds with a near-transparent reaction. This way to the Exlt. ■





Beautiful Lettuce Page

We want to hear from you. Write: Headpress, 40 Rossall Avenue, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 1JD, Great Britain.
Email: davidk@hpress.u-net.com



Enjoyed your latest issue (cool cover!), especially the piece on Mexican music — excellent, enough to make me envious of the author's collection. [*That would be Joe Scott Wilson, HEADPRESS 12—Ed.*]

Incidentally, Yomo Toro had some material released in this country on Antilles via Island Records. I have a promo 12" from 1988 called 'El Sapo' which features a female vocalist in a kind of 'answerback' song with the band (alas no picture cover). It's pretty funky in a manic sort of way.

There was also a recent UK compilation on Soul Jazz records called **NU YORK!—CULTURE CLASH IN NEW YORK CITY: EXPERIMENTS IN LATIN MUSIC 1970-77**. It details the effects of Latin music on New York's black scene and some of the hybrids it threw up.

Only musical style that doesn't seem to have been ventured into yet are those marvellously bad porn soundtracks — how about it?

Darren Wall, Stockport



Would it be possible to bring out the very first editions of **HEADPRESS** in a book format — as **ANSWER ME!** did — to satiate the requirements of new readers such as myself who have maybe only got

the last couple of issues? **CRITICAL VISION** just made it worse — i.e. you just gave us a taster of what we have missed!

One last thing, I recently picked up an old copy of **KILLER KOMIX** in my local Forbidden Planet. Now I vaguely remember that in issue 10 of **HEADPRESS** there was an ad for **KILLER KOMIX 2**. What I want to

know is, did this ever get released and is it still available?

Richard Simpson, Huntingdon

There are no plans to repackage the early issues of **Headpress** in their entirety. **Killer Komix 2** is definitely in the works. Stay tuned for murder.



Dear Mr Kerekes & Mr Slater,
I have just finished reading **KILLING FOR CULTURE**, a startling book quite unlike any other I have encountered. You seem neither coy nor salacious, but instead tread a narrow path of objectivity, and you are to be congratulated.

However, there is an aspect of **KILLING FOR CULTURE** which I would dispute, from my experience working in television, namely the absence of coverage of capital punishment. For three and a half years I worked at the Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC) in London, a Saudi-Arabian-backed satellite TV channel, ostensibly created with the aim of 'moderating' the Gulf in the wake of the Gulf War, but benefiting from the funds and influence of the Saudi Royal family and repaying it with propaganda and obeisance. What the Saudis demanded, in terms of programming and news coverage, they received.

Each Friday morning saw the live relay of prayers from a Saudi Arabian mosque, via the state-run Saudi television, on MBC. It is after the Friday prayers that the punishments dictated by Islamic law are meted out, in public, outside the mosque. Normally, the Saudi-TV feed of pictures would end with the last prayers, and MBC would revert to its own programming. On at least



one occasion, however, this feed continued. It was clear that an execution was about to be broadcast, and the (English) supervisor in the Master Control Room, where the incoming feed was received, instructed that the broadcast be ended forthwith. The producer responsible for the editorial, as opposed to the technical, aspects of the programme disagreed, claiming that the transmission should be allowed to continue. However, citing ITC regulations and British sensitivities, the supervisor overruled and the broadcast ended before anything was rebroadcast by MBC. The Saudi TV incoming feed, however, did not cut away.

This raises several points. Executions and punishment mutilations would seem to be broadcast quite routinely in Saudi Arabia, a degree of exposure unthinkable elsewhere. My opinion had always been that the televising of capital punishment would guarantee its abolition when people appreciated its brutality, mess and pointlessness. But I begin to wonder whether the televised slaughter in Saudi Arabia might actually contribute to the obedience of its society. Then again, it might be more to do with the religious aspects than with the physical punishment.

Bloodthirstiness was also evidenced at MBC in the way news items were edited. On the day of the Sarajevo marketplace mortar attack in which nearly 100 were killed, MBC played its (pro-Muslim) propaganda card and ran two minutes of the most horrible pictures from the scene, unvoiced by any journalist, the blood and carnage accompanied only by the wails and screams of the Sarajevans themselves, at the top of the first main news bulletin of the evening. As the then Head of News commented, with some pride, "No other TV network in the world would have done that..."

Keep up the intriguing work, and again I congratulate you on a chillingly unique volume.

Richard Carr, London

I would like to mention that apart from the wonderful contents of your magazine, I also look forward to seeing the cover illustration of each new HEADPRESS. I think my favourite is probably Issue No.8. I

find the woman is quite sexy. I wish I had what that bloke's got.

Martin Radich, Edinburgh

Headpress 8 — bit of a hit with Nina, too. See next page.



There are loads of loons around Fowey, St Austell and Bodmin (neighbouring towns) at the moment because the government have cut the budget of Bodmin Mental Health hospital — instantly ensuring the release of all 'non-dangerous' patients into the community. On any day you can walk through these towns (mainly St Austell and Bodmin) and see people with severe expressions hiding behind pillars, with arms clasped 'round them for security, hanging on for dear life — I'll try to get some pictures.

A. Cowling, Cornwall



I thought you were rather hard on SEX, SHOCKS & SADISM in the last HEADPRESS [*Culture Guide—No.12*]. All right, I suppose it is a bit of an advert for Todd Tjersland's video business, but so what? You see, I have a problem, I'm not an intellectual fucker. So rather than tucking into my copy of MORRISSEY & MARR—THE SEVERED ALLIANCE (which I got for a bargain £3 at WH Smith), I find myself constantly distracted by PLAYBOY'S 'COLLECTOR'S GOLD EDITION' BOOK OF LINGERIE. It's the same tragic story with my copy of SHE BOP—THE DEFINITIVE HISTORY OF WOMEN IN ROCK POP AND SOUL. I am constantly distracted from reading it by BONDAGE WORLD (which I got from a shop in Soho for £10. It almost looks like the original, so good is the copying process used). And even a serious work like Rosalind Miles' THE RITES OF MAN falls victim to a marauding copy of PORCO MONDO.

Nowadays I mainly read newspapers, but even this is plagued by distractions, i.e. the best bit of the SUNDAY TIMES for 28th July this year, for me at least, was the cover of the Style section, featuring a fetishily-attired female backside with a whip provocatively positioned near it. The rest of the paper was crap.



With **SEX SHOCKS & SADISM**, I was attracted to:

- 1 A cover with a naked woman on it.
 - 2 A cover with a naked woman on it who is being threatened with a whip.
 - 3 Details of a huge number of films that would appeal to a pervert like me.
 - 4 The author's sense of humour.
 - 5 The fact that the guy in the shop who sold it assured me that this publication was lucky to get through customs. I can see what he meant.
 - 6 Quite a few good wank pictures.
- Obviously a must-buy for me, even at £27.50.

The only objection I have with the book is that a few of the films cross self-imposed mental fences of mine: notably, girls being taken captive from a boarding school and raped and tortured (**TORTURE KING**), and a daughter being repeatedly raped by her father (**TREAT ME LIKE A WHORE, DADDY**). I'm all in favour of sex films, but not if they involve kids. I suppose the author was right to include them but he should have been more damning of them.

But, whichever way you look at it, this sort of publication puts the female on a pedestal for us mere males to look up at in wonder. Even if it's a (I hope, simulated) sex and torture flick, the director is subconsciously acknowledging that women are the superior sex.

Chris, Kent

You don't walk around with a big target painted on your jacket, do you Chris? The guy in the shop obviously saw you coming.



Nina Cherry on the set of Carl Dancer's **DIAL P FOR PINK**.
Photo © Anthony Petkovich

People who read Headpress

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Love's Gonna Get You Anyway

WITH JOE SCOTT WILSON

[Quality music, Affordable Prices]

Here's something to think about the next time you're fingering through the records at your local Tape & Disc exchange shop: Joe Scott bought this and it was much cheaper then. Of course, it's a statement only valid if you're musing over a copy of **Peaceful Children** by The Road Home, or **A Time To Remember!** by The Artie Kornfeld Tree. Records I have bought from junk emporiums for a mere few pence and subsequently discovered for sale at 'Collector Prices' in specialist record outlets. What I think happens in these places is that the guy (or girl) behind the counter ponders for a moment, clueless: "Artie Kornfeld Tree — Eh, what is that?" Then determines, "It's got a psychedelic cover, some schmo will fork out seven quid for it." And, "The Road Home? Looks shit enough to be worth a tenner."

I laugh at Artie Kornfeld when he's on sale for more than a pound.

Wait until you get your expensive record home, place it carefully on your turntable expecting to experience a lost work of unmitigated genius — that you have discovered — and all that pops out of your speakers is drive! If you take it back quick enough you might get a half-back exchange.

So, Joe, other than rubbing our noses in the shit, what bargain basement platters have you in store for us this time around? Glad you asked. We're on a home-boy, easy Rock, somewhat funky trail this morning. Pull on your hiking boots — it's back to nature in a syncopated Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young kind of style.

PEACEFUL CHILDREN

The Road Home [ABC/Dunhill, 1977]

A TIME TO REMEMBER!

The Artie Kornfeld Tree [Dunhill, 1977]

There's a phonetic ring to the names Artie Kornfeld Tree and Road Home. They sound like the vinyl equivalent of second cousins. They look it too. Come on in, meet Willy. The record company had to soft focus the cover for The Road Home's **Peaceful Children** album because Willy is so fat. The proverbial road home is obscured by Willy. Willy is taking up the length and breadth of the road home. You get the picture — those aren't fields behind the



band, that is one-fifth of the band (and he's called Willy). It's a gate fold sleeve (unfortunately, it doesn't fold out into a big Willy), so you get clear head-and-shoulder shots of the band inside. There's Willy at the organ when he was about 15 (years old, not stones; stones would be 20 at a guess), and there's Willy with long hair and a hippie beard now that he's in a Rock 'n' Roll band. Actually, I'm not going to come down too hard on poor Willy because he plays a mighty fine keyboard — the Wurlitzer type, takes a little time to get up enough steam and rattles a lot. The low 'crumbling' hum that introduces the track 'Love's Gonna Get You' is Willy's organ, building enough momentum so it can play right. The rest of the band are forced to wait for Willy to peak before they can start. In fact, I'm not going to knock any of **Peaceful Children** because it's *all* good. Okay, 'One Tin Soldier' is tedious, so what am I going to do? Ask for a discount? It's not a massive record in a big famous way, more of a Sixties Rock Festival cult soundtrack feel. That's my analogy musically.

The Arty Kornfeld Tree, on the other hand, have snagged onto Sly & The Family Stone's shirt tails. There is much funk and a lot of resonant "oom oom"-type vocal punctuation on their **A Time To Remember!** album. That said, again I'm not going to come down on the thing. (After sitting through half a dozen Mexican records straight, *everything* else in the world seems a little brighter.) There is an energy and drive, and the Kornfelds do a good job. Pity the same can't be said of the packaging. The front cover utilises every colour in the visible spectrum then invents a couple more. It's a picture of a tree, the trunk of which is made from man and woman; the branches and leaves are members of the band. The tree is near the ocean. The ocean is blue... On the back, however, it's all horrible: Stark, washed-out and black & white. The tree has been replaced by... a MUSHROOM

CLOUD! The man and woman are SKELETONS! The band is GONE! The album title on the front cover is **A Time To Remember!** Turn over and it's **A Time To Remember?** question mark. Let's make the world a better place quick, because I for sure don't want to remember *horror!* Then again, I don't want Artie Kornfeld in my tree either. I expect that Artie originally chose not to have any credits or track listing on the sleeve, but someone down the line, late in the day, thought to the contrary. What we have then is a loose slip of paper, folded around the sleeve, with a list of what's on board. And so as not to disrupt the sequentially of it all — **A Time to Remember/A Time To Remember?** — the songs fall under the heading, 'Songs to remember!' There is an insert, too, presumably offering full titles and credits, but as it's in a scrawl that makes Zappa's **Fillmore East** jacket look calligraphically sound, one cannot be certain.



ATMOSPHERE

Colours [Dot, 1969]

Atmosphere sports a sleeve by Victor Moscoso. Not one of his best designs, more a tea-break doodle. Though Colours are considered something of a 'name' band in collector circles, it is down to the fact that their debut album was pretty cool. It should come as no surprise that the Colours album Joe Scott happened upon in a cheap bin is the band's second effort, which is crap. If their debut had raw guitar solos, this follow-up trades them in for saxophone and horns. Every number suffers from orchestration. Colours must have believed themselves to be at the dawning of a new musical age when they undertook this project. Poor misguided fools. Chances are they were having second thoughts by the end of the record, because the last track — and the only example of guitar solo excess — is the best track. Other Dot Records artists include The Peppermint Trolley Company, Leonard Nimoy and Liberace.

INTO THE SHRINE

by Jove [Aleph Records, 1977]

Funny title but brace yourself for ego-overload! **Into The Shrine** is a good indication as to why bands have more than one member and record companies have board meetings. Jove is a solo artist, designing his own album packaging and releasing his own records. Nothing to keep him in check but his own conscience. So, onto the front sleeve of Jove's record goes a really ugly sculpture that Jove has made, onto the back sleeve goes mystical garbage that means nothing to anyone but Jove, and onto the record itself goes Jove singing. And if that isn't enough, Jove presses the record on white vinyl. This is record no. 234 of a limited edition of one thousand copies, signed by Jove himself. (That's right, I have Jove's autograph!) All of which would be palatable if the noise that came out the grooves was quirky, or idiosyncratic or something, but it isn't. It's just ballad material. Stuff that really suits titles like 'Game Of Love' and 'Love And My Life'. Imagine Donovan but with shorter songs. Where is the stuff that would suit that sculpture on the front cover? Are there any songs anywhere in the world that *would* compliment a die cast dwarf man-beast holding a bit of flex with Jove's face superimposed on its head? (I would like to think so.) But it's not entirely Jove's fault, his friends are encouraging him. Take for instance the liner notes (beneath the heading 'Liner Notes') by one Ed Ochs, Editor in Chief of 'Rock Around The World' (don't look at me).





'it has been 3 years since Jove's **Sweeter Song** album went out into the world,' opens Ed, 'and only now is the world beginning to catch up with it.' After determining that the future freedom of mankind is at stake, and that Jove believes a 'wake-up call' is at hand, Ed goes on:

In this quest Jove's music constitutes a modern life support system (see album #1) on the one 'hand' stirring the inner heart to new wakefulness and on the other urging the recognition of human-spiritual priorities. In this 2nd album we see something of Joves [s/c] personal life and the integration of personal and divine love.

Where this integration takes place I'm not at liberty to divulge, suffice to say — on this personal level — it has more in keeping with vinyl and wastebin, than with divine love. I'll save you the revelation that comes with Ed meeting Jove in the Nashville Bus Station one day. Okay, I won't: Ed bumps into Jove one day in the Nashville Bus station and Jove says to him: "Love must be understood, not just experienced, if anyone ever hopes to rise above." ■





HEADPRESS 7: LONG OUT OF PRINT UNTIL NOW! A VERY LIMITED QUANTITY OF THIS CLASSIC '666-HERL SATAN' NUMBER HAS BEEN UNEARTHED. GET IT WHILE STOCKS LAST.



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HEADPRESS 10: "HA HA HA" MAKE OIANA; INTERVIEW WITH NECROPHILE, KAREN GREENLEE; UK'S FIRST SMUT FEST. CAMPAIGN FOR DECENCY IN LITERATURE...



HEADPRESS 11: "SIN" CELEBRITY SUBSTANCE ABUSE; ALOAPUERTA, EECUTIONS; WHACKED-OUT FILMMAKER MATTHEW SMITH. DISMEMBERMENT IN THE MOVIES...



HEADPRESS 12: 5000M - AN APPRECIATION. INTERVIEW WITH RUSS MEYER, WRITING FOR BRITAIN'S ADULT MAGS, MEXICAN MUSIC, GILLES DE RAIS & FRED WEST; URINE ABUSE



HEADPRESS 13: "PLAGUE" IN YOUR HANDS AS WE SPEAK, HEROES

BACK ISSUES

Feeling down because your collection isn't complete? That's why you're about to lock the garage door and turn on the ignition? Well, consider the alternative for a moment: while Headpress 1 — 6 are sold out, there are limited quantities of the above numbers still available. So order what you can and just hack off a leg or something. But hurry — next issue it might have to be two legs...



MEET LARRY AND THE GODDESS BUNNY — THEY'RE IN HEADPRESS 14!

Don't miss it! Advance orders for **SUICIDE: HEADPRESS 14** are now being taken...

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ACME ROCKET POWERED BURGER MIX

Warner Brothers come down on Jelinski & Buttgereit

DAVID KERES

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broadcasting of this video is prohibited.



JELINSKI & BUTTGEREIT GBR

"If I dood it, I gets a whippin'. I dood it!"
—Bugs Bunny, *The Case of the Missing Hare*
[1942]

25 April 1996. It's just gone mid-day in the Jelinski & Buttgereit office and the last of a nine page document finally unloads itself from the fax machine. A great start to a Thursday afternoon: The message is courtesy of Warner Brothers. And they're pissed.

Manfred Jelinski and Jörg Buttgereit are hardly strangers to controversy. Very few people reading **Headpress** will not be familiar with Buttgereit, the Berlin filmmaker, and Jelinski, his producer. Their work together has included the films **Nekromantik** and **Nekromantik 2**, which, up until recently were banned outright in their native Germany and remain unwelcome virtually everywhere else in the world.¹ In attempting to overturn the ruling imposed upon them, Jelinski and Buttgereit were embroiled in years of legal hassles and subject to police investigation. Ultimately they won through. They successfully defended the movies as 'works of artistic merit' and the ban was lifted. Now the films can be lawfully screened in German theatres and distributed via mail order on videotape.²

Except there's a new problem reared its furry little head. Warner Brothers. If Jelinski/Buttgereit use their logo again they will be slapped with an immediate fine. Why? Because Warners claim that the JB moniker too closely resembles their own, WB.



On 6 May, J+B mail order issued a circular to all their retail customers. It opened:

WARNER BROS. is suing us for using a logo which looks similar to the WARNER BROS. logo. We had to submit and to stop immediately all our distribution activities with logo-affiliated products. We are threatened by a penalty of DM 50.000 in any single case.

We are sorry to tell that this means the same for you, too.

Please stop immediately the selling of all J+B products with the complained logo. Please help us solving the problem by acting like this:

1. Take the video covers, which have the logo on the back, out of the boxes and send all of them [to arrive no later than] 30 May ... to Geiss Lutz Hootz Hirsch & Partner...

The letter requested that all video sleeves with the offending logo — 11 titles in total, including **Nekromantik**, **Schramm**, and **Der Todesking** — be sent to a Stuttgart-based law firm representing the Time Warner Entertainment Company of New York. All tapes themselves were to be sent back to the J+B mail order address for full reimbursement.

The Warner Bros. logo consists of the letters 'WB' set in a shield. The Warner lawyers had in their possession one J+B catalogue and a video tape, and put it that the logo Jelinski and Buttgerelt had chosen to use was "nearly identical". They demanded a list of all ads, tapes, sleeves, posters, etc which bore the offending item, the quantities involved and to which stores they had been sold. J+B were given until 15 May — 19 days from receipt of the fax — to comply, otherwise Warners would sue. No options. No alternative.

"We are now officially in liquidation," states Jörg Buttgerelt. "The costs of reprinting new covers etc pissed us off. Not to mention the fact that it would be impossible for us to prove, if Warner got hold of a bootleg of one of our tapes bearing the logo, that it wasn't actually us who had issued it. For every [offending] JB logo that Warners finds, we have to pay DM 50.000 [approx. £21,000]. So, it is easier to have no company at all."

That is DM 50.000 *each*. Warner landed both Manfred and Jörg with separate bills — if they didn't comply with their demands, an initial fine of DM 250.000 apiece, and for each and every logo which might surface after 30 May, the additional fee totalling DM 100.000.

Buttgerelt admits that it wasn't much fun selling tapes mail order. They intend to steer clear of mail order in the future, but hope to work in the production of new videos and provide master tapes for wholesale distributors³, letting someone else get on with sales. As for Buttgerelt himself, he awaits financing for his next film project, **The Man From TV**, and has just completed a several weeks stint as special effects supervisor on **Kondom Des Grauens** [trans: Condom of Terror], a movie produced by sexploitation veteran Erwin C. Dietrich. **Kondom Des Grauens** opened in 15 theatres across Berlin and looks set to be a success. However, most of the gore effects have been excised and Dietrich claims he won't make back the £2m he sunk into advertising. (As far as advertising goes, Buttgerelt



Top: Buttgerelt's promo video for US band Shock Therapy. Next page: Buttgerelt during shooting promo video for German band, Fleischman. November 95.



claims there is no evidence of *any* money being spent to promote the film — let alone £2m!

Jorg Buttgerreit admits to being fortunate that he didn't incur the full wrath of Warner Brothers. "I am no way trying to defend the actions of those humourless executives," he says, "but they only did what was necessary to make us stop using the logo. They could have done a lot more damage. But they have to be careful about their family image as well. And we did let them know that the press reaction would be on our side." ■

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NOTES

1. Check out Kerekes' book **Sex Murder Art** [Critical Vision, 1994].

2. Maybe things aren't so hunky dory after all. Despite the fact that the films are officially no longer illegal, in June 1996 the District Attorney of Nurnberg saw fit to intercept two copies of the Japanese edition **Nekromantik** en route from Tokyo.

Furthermore, several tapes, being returned by an Austrian dealer complying with the wishes of Warner Bros, were confiscated by German customs. As of writing, none of the above have been relinquished, despite J+B's insistence that "the trial is already over".

3. For instance, **The Nether-Horror Collection, Aftermath and Dark Tales**.



GREATEST TITS!

'Best Of' Videotapes and the Art of Porn Cinema

GRANT WISHES

They are the last-minute purchase on Christmas Eve, ideal stocking-fillers and a sure-fire blast of thrills guaranteed to please even the most awkward. They are 'Best Of' videos, clip-compilations of exciting or classic moments in sport usually, but an ever-growing slice of the market are populist (some would say cynical) titles featuring mishaps, accidents or criminal activity ranging from motorway madness to football hooliganism.

Much of this is a cop-out, a safe bet. Flustered Grandparents don't need to know which team Little Billy supports — who *wouldn't* be overjoyed with **Jimmy Hill Presents 101 Classic Goals or Favourite World Cup Moments**? And Uncle Bob may well be a shit, but **Wipe Out—Two Hours of Motorised Carnage!** should shut him up for a while. "This'll be good," you murmur before handing over the cash for **Allmania—Sting Like A Bee**, lured in by the promise of all manner of manly action. Like Mondo movies, Best Of tapes share a propensity for hype.

The porno video has its own version of the compilation tape, in the form of the 'cum-shot movie'. Masquerading under titles like **Carnival Of Cum, White And Hot** and the self-explanatory **101 Facial Cum Shots**, cum-shot movies — little more than scene-after-scene of ejaculation — seek to give the punter what they want: easy thrills. No more fast-forwarding to the 'good bits'.

What cum-shot comps share with more legitimate titles is a lack of, or at most a minimalist, narrative: A speeding race-car takes a corner too fast, flips-out and bursts into flames. End of scene: A



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wizard of the wing shimmies past one! two! three! hapless defenders before calmly slotting the ball past the beleaguered goalkeeper. End of scene: An anonymous dick gives a few strokes to an anonymous orifice before withdrawing and delivering the goods. End of scene. This is 'entertainment' at its most lean. No more. No time to draw breath before the next pulsating instalment.

The most obvious difference between porn titles and the ones you'd buy in the British High Street is in terms of quality. Purchasers of a football or boxing tape should be reasonably sure of getting a fair quota of fun and thrills. Imagine buying **Goooooooooalllllll** only to get it home and find 90 minutes of soft tap-ins from a few yards. But porn producers have no such scruples. Cum-shot tapes are hastily cobbled together from whatever sources are close to hand (rival product usually). No sooner are you done enjoying the dubious delights of some German wank-fest than you're transported to 1970s Denmark as some bearded goon despoils a bony hippie. Then it's a Traci Lords movie and **BANG!** a colour-saturated Yank motor-home provides the venue for yet another Peter North shower scene. (Again like their mondo relation, such comps are prone to cull material from any era or source.)

It's often said that cum-scenes are the *point* of porn movies, hence the term 'the money shot'. Ejaculation 'proves' authenticity and we go away happy we've been witness to real sex. Cum-shot tapes in fact suggest the exact opposite.

After sitting through a couple of hours of strangely-shaped men spilling their seed, the only thought you can, uh, come away with is "Why on earth do they bother?" The myth about porn is that the hard bit (hur, hur...) is getting, and maintaining an erection in front of an audience. What porn comps prove is that for every pro who can get up and off in the blink of an eye, there are half-a-dozen blokes who have to hammer their dicks into submission while attempting to deliver the required deposit. It's at these moments that you become aware of the artifice of porn, of its unreality. Here's a guy who's just been banging a *babe* and he can't come. All of a sudden you can hear the director, see the lights, imagine the boredom. And then he comes. "Is that it?" Jesus.

Film scholars have been curiously loathe to study pornographic movies with the same degree of vigour they devote to other genres. The bookshelves may groan under the weight of countless tomes on the sexual politics of porn, porn and censorship, and the odd exposé, but no one (to my knowledge) has yet sought to analyse porn film product on a purely formal basis. The content of porn has been endlessly debated and discussed, but the way it presents anything has been ignored. The result has been that porn is never truly understood.

As anyone who has ever suffered through even a few porn films must know, most of the genre is shoddy, amateurish, incompetent, uninteresting. And yet because it shares certain cinematic elements with mainstream film it must be considered cinematic, albeit a different kind of cinema.

The sheer amateurish-ness of some porn has to be an aesthetic in its own right. Only personally shot videos (like weddings etc) and mishap TV shows like **You've Been Framed!** share a similar look. In terms of techniques and rules, porn has devised its own filmic grammar — the use of the camera, editing, lighting, sound, even acting, porn lives by its own rules. In that the public continues to accept and consume porn product in a way that avant-garde and experimental films have never been, suggests porn has been shockingly neglected.

Classical Hollywood narrative schemes are political — an ideological construct that mirrors the goal-orientated nature of Western philosophies: Films, like our lives, have beginnings, middles and ends (ABC narratives). But the plotless sex of porno loops often open with the 'action' already running, proceeding directly to the — literal — climax (BC narratives). It's also not common to find porn that starts at B and stays there — sex, but no ejaculation and hence no resolution.

On a technical level, aspects like camera movement, framing and focusing can be strangely erratic. Many present-day European porn tapes still carry soundtracks which seem to bear absolutely no relation to events on-screen, a hang-over from early 'stag' films and Seventies 'arcade loops' which utilised the same track over and over on different titles.

Even these few initial examples give some credence to the idea that porn cinema is a fairly unique genre. If it were proven that porn product was sufficiently different from mainstream titles to the extent that we receive and understand it differently, the debate on censorship for example may have to begin again. At the very least, those writing about porn cannot assume that existing film analysis is equipped to deal with the strange charms of on-screen sex. ■

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VOYEURZ

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ANTON BLACK



MUSICALS. Don't you just love the roar of the crowd, the tap-tap-tap of synchronised feet, the aural treacle of inane lyrics about love? Depends on whether or not you've been lobotomised I suppose. I haven't been and I don't. From my thankfully limited experience of these West End monstrosities I find them banal, aimed at people with enough money to be able to afford the exorbitant ticket price but not enough taste, intelligence or, dammit, *courage*, to appreciate anything more demanding. It would seem that the only ingredient necessary for a "smash musical" is *bigness*: big money, big sets, big numbers... an empty spectacle that washes over you after a moment of acclimatisation. It may be big, but it isn't clever.

Your average musical punter would probably balk in horror at the idea of watching a porn film. Shows are respectable; porn is, well, filth. Shows are social; porn is for the onanist. And so the union of these 'diametrically opposed' spectacles is an intriguing idea if nothing else. Busby Berkeley with bazoomas. Andrew Lloyd Webber with arse. Stephen Sondheim with snatch. I'm a tolerant man, and I'll give the vapid medium of the musical a second go if there's going to be skin at the end of the tunnel.

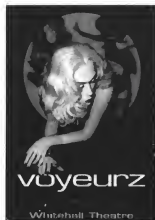
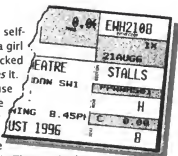
The Soho film company for which I work has an arrangement with various theatre producers, allowing us free entry into various shows in return for free cinema tickets. As these are rarely for plays or stand-up comedy I don't exploit them much, but when the opportunity arose to see **Voyeurz**, I decided to partake. Couldn't hurt. I'd heard tell of how the show was packed full of nudity, S&M and explicit sex. Now, it's always wise (nay, mandatory) to be wary of such hyperbole from the mainstream media (the same reptiles that extol **Silence of the Lambs** as — and I quote — 'the most frightening film ever made' and Guns n Roses as 'the most dangerous band in the world'), but after you hit the stop button on **Salò 120 Days** for the *n*th time, you get the giggling feeling that you're missing out, that maybe, please God, mass-market entertainment might at some point in time throw up something genuinely novel (and thus 'dangerous' — whatever the fuck

that means when applied to entertainment).

Alas, no. **Voyeurz** (annoyingly bearing a self-imposed '18' certificate) is the tale, told in song, of a girl who goes to meet her friend in the big city but is sucked into a world of S&M lesbianism. And, hey — she *likes* it.

I can't tell you how this all resolves itself because I cut my losses and left after an hour. A mere three days after having wasted an hour-and-a-half of my life, I'm at pains to remember anything about the musical. The plot is effectively incomprehensible (I've had this confirmed by others who sat it out). The music, by Fem2Fem, is bland pop poop — I expect they've an album out soon as the video backdrop flashed their logo up every five minutes (and their Svengali produced the show). A band like Tribe X might not be much good but at least they're sincere in their lesbianic meanderings, as opposed to these manufactured rug-chewing puppets... But then, who cares about sincerity, because we've all come to see T&A, right? (and hopefully a little V too). Well, lemme tell ya: stay at home with the Sears catalogue. The whole thing is too *pretty* and sanitised, too damn *staged*, to have any real charge. Now, staged sex as entertainment can be arousing — I've spilt my seed to **Café Flesh** plenty of times — but **Voyeurz'** idea of erotica is lots of people dancing in close proximity to one other, sometimes touching in a pseudo-intimate way. It's all a rather lame attempt to suck money from chinless yups in exchange for something both 'daring' and upmarket, i.e. devoid of the stigma of good honest schlong-slapping porn. Porn at its best and worst is exactly what it purports to be: an agent to relieve men of excess semen. As such, it does its job. I've evicted countless sperm from their testicular home over the cruddiest Color Climax 8mm loops in my time, but I never once got wood during **Voyeurz**. Seeing the beautiful people naked on stage is useless. It simply reminds you of your own non-beautiful status. They're beautiful, you're not. They're up there, you're down here. These people aren't real. (I think they probably put them in boxes after the performance.) The same distant unreality is omnipresent in the musical: the S&M night-club lifestyle is portrayed by people occasionally cracking whips several feet away from any potential whipee, along with members of Bad2Worse chanting bondage buzzwords like "Pain! Desire! Sex! Control!" Oh, right, so *that's* what S&M is like. I see. Likewise there's a little segment on Tantric Sex (wholly incongruous with the rest of the plot) that bears no relation to the reality of the practice. It's like a Suckers Guide To Deviant Lifestyles.

And therein is the key to the whole scam. Some bloke in the **Evening Standard** talked of how "Londoners like to be deliciously shocked". 'Deliciously' fucking shocked. Shock with no substance. Shock to be laughingly discussed at cocktail parties with slobbering acquaintances, shock as commodity, as dispassionate conversation piece. I want my shock with *souf*! The fools who swallow dumb-arsed marketing plays like this and delight in being swindled would be completely bamboozled by, say, a Whitehouse record or a Jörg Buttgeriet film, where you aren't given signposts as to what your opinion should be by the press, and which aren't built to fade from your mind come Monday morning. Let them stick to **Silence of the Lambs** and Guns n Roses and **Voyeurz**. I like being elitist and I don't want them in my gang. ■



ARE LED ZEPPELIN FAGGOTS?

editor's note

Robert moves in mysterious ways. Several months ago, your humble editor thought that it might be an idea to dedicate space in **Headpress** to Rock super-group, Led Zeppelin. For many years, the only albums of theirs he owned were **Led Zeppelin** and **Led Zeppelin III**. Much of his developing years were spent in a pub whose jukebox played 'Whole Lotta Love' non-stop. (A falsehood, obviously: they interrupted Led Zep with occasional bursts of America's 'Horse With No Name'.) And that's as far as it got with Led Zep — the abysmal **Houses Of The Holy** album made certain of that. Then along came Bill Landis' Zep piece in **Sleazoid Express** (from which the title of this article is taken). Then, Dread Zeppelin in concert. Then, the emergence in 1995 of Stephen Davis' revised and updated **Hammer of the Gods: Led Zeppelin Unauthorised**. Theirs, for sure, was the ultimate Rock excess story and that book the topping on the cake: the Led Zep trip was on!

The initial idea for a kind of quasi-regular piece on the group came suddenly, while listening to six cassettes of bootleg concerts a friend had taped. The performances ranged from the stop-dead-in-your-tracks-and-listen good, through to numbingly awful bad. What to do — a round-up of Led Zeppelin bootlegs (rather, those six concert tapes), or...?

The light of Robert was shining down. No decision needed to be made as — this very morning in fact — the following popped through the letterbox and deposited itself squarely on the doormat... Through the same channels, courtesy the same shadowy figures who acquired the 'letters to porn magazines' as collected in our **Critical Vision** book, the missive below was originally directed to the editor of a top Adult title. Needless to say, it never made it past that publication's wastebin. [Spelling and grammar are unchanged.]

Dear ——— magazine,

I am writing you this letter because I like your magazine very much.

In your recent October issue of 1996 there is a layout I like very much.

I am very much in to two girl layouts and ——— magazine is known for them. But because I like two girl layouts it doesn't mean that I don't like the one girl layouts.

I like the one girl layouts very much but the three girl layout called '——— ———' is very good.

I have always liked your magazine for its good photography, letters and the many different things involved with your magazine. '——— ———' was a good layout and worth seeing.

I have always liked two or three girl layouts because just think...

Two or three girls get together and shoot a layout. They end up being good friends and have a relationship.

They end up with a layout that is better than a one girl layout and the sex that comes from it is the best in the world. Years from now they look back and the relationship was worth it.

I have always appreciated this because at one time I was into Black and White photography and I realize how good your magazine



really is.

I have my feelings about "X" [as written—Ed.] because of some of the things surrounding my life. It is not to say that over what I am about to tell you are my only feelings, but an outlook I have. Here is a story you may like and be interested in on a level of the same feelings I have about the people in it.

When I was born my name was ————. My name now is ————.

In September of 1979 the music group named Led Zeppelin came out with their 10th album called **In Through The Out Door**.

The first song on the 2nd side called 'Carouselambra' was dedicated to me by Robert Plant and Led Zeppelin.

When I first heard the song I couldn't figure out why Robert Plant liked me as a celebrity but decided to accept him in my life. Later I found out that he was involved with some enemies in a court case surrounding my life and had dedicated the song to me to slander me. I never really liked Robert Plant or Led Zeppelin before the song and found out later that my feelings were correct about how I felt about them before the song for the slander they committed against me.

So you can see my feelings towards them. You may have the same feelings as I do about them... Know what I mean..?

Just think what ass holes Led Zeppelin are, destroying everybody's sex life for their own gain and never really making anybody's dreams come true.

I never ever really seen a blond who found her way to the top of her stairway to heaven.

So you can see how I feel.

Of course I have my other feeling about "X" and one recent problem which stemmed from the same group of people which were involved with the slander Robert Plant and Led Zeppelin committed against me.

This came from a girl who screwed me over but good in more ways than I am willing to talk about. But it's been my one and only problem with a girl I have dated and I mention it to you because of the caliber of how bad of a relationship it was and still is. But I don't mean to tell you about her in any way to make you upset, I just mention it because I don't believe what she did.

You see I really like your magazine for the reasons I gave you before, letters, and the different things in it. But because ——— is such a good magazine with its many different branches of things in it I tell you about these things because I feel your the magazine for it. This I do besides the same feelings we may have together over the music group Led Zeppelin and the people and situations surrounding them. They have always been apart of the unlawful influences that affect "X" and the sexual world in this day. It's unfortunate that this exists but as I said before I have my feelings and you may have feelings that are the same.

But your magazine reflects your outlook and I feel your outlook is very good.

So I am writing you to tell you how much I like your magazine and the many different things in it.

I am also writing you to tell you a little about my self and to tell you I am looking forward to our correspondences in the future.

Sincerely yours

Mr ————.

send us your
Feelings and
stories on
Led ZEPPELIN

Sharing the Experience

cruising the bay area

DAVID GREENALL

San Francisco. The City by the Bay. For gay men the city has for decades been the homo-heart of America. The place to head for if you want to get your rocks off and feel the earth move. Following the devastation caused by the AIDS virus and the subsequent closure of the city's infamous bath houses, the virginal visitor is now all too often pointed in the direction of the clean and respectable Castro district. This may be the most concentrated gay area of the city, but it suffers a severe sleaze deficiency. Sex is certainly available, but you'll have to buy it a drink and chat a while before you get between the sheets. And on a short visit who the fuck wants to waste time on such unnecessary pleasantries?

I had spoken to a friend prior to my visit who had enjoyed sex in many a San Francisco bath house during the late-Seventies. His stories of anonymous fisting in the rest rooms were both intriguing and intimidating. Just what was I to expect? At best, a world of rampant sexuality not possible in England. At worst, a whole army a slack bottom faggots eager to sit on my forearm!

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3 MOVIE
SCREENS
HOT GAY
PROGRAMS
SIMULTANEOUSLY!



Without a care in the world, I set out from my Ninth Street hotel, away from the chrome and cocktail glow of the Castro and deep into the other side of gay culture. To the ghettos not recommended in the tourist guides. To the sperm spattered monitors of porno video arcades and the predators and prey that stalk and prowl such venues. This is where the easy sex is. Fucking in Frisco. And believe me, the local talent is far from shy. It's my conclusion that when a gay San Franciscan sees a hole in a wall, it's instinctive for him to get out his cock and poke it through. And more often than not there's a receptive velvet tongue on the other side!

Sure, you'll get a fine view of this beautiful city from Coit Tower or the glass elevator in the Fairmont Hotel, but until you have peered through a San Francisco glory hole you ain't seen shit!

So off we trot. Not so much a cocksucker's guide to where the action is but a personal rendition of some exciting discoveries. Confessions of a holiday-maker if you will. Only a few hours into my travels and my first port of call is Folsom Street, three blocks south of Market Street. Folsom Gulch and City Entertainment are both situated here. With its dark alleyways, intimidating parking lots and huge posters warning you of queer-bashing, Folsom Street is high on danger and sleaze, becoming quite a cruising area after dark. As both venues are almost opposite each other, it's common to see guys flitting between the two long before you reach the front door. Both offer a giant selection of video tapes, magazines and other interesting items, but to get to the meat of things you must first check-in your bag at the counter and enter the backroom where the viewing booths and video arcade are situated. Both venues have an alarmed floor mat in the backroom doorway so that cruisers know when fresh produce is on it's way. You must purchase a minimum of \$2.00 worth of tokens to enter (don't fret if you don't use them all, as there is always a beggar or two outside hungry for unused tokens), each gold token complete with an image in relief of a heterosexual couple in a compromising position.

As this is my first visit, I am naïve and stupidly buy \$4.00 worth of tokens, spending the next 10 minutes waiting for a vacant booth in which to spend my new-found currency. The place is packed and men all around rape me with their eyes. As a door opens and a fat guy makes his exit tucking in his shirt, I quickly lock myself in the tiny booth. I pop in a token and the monitor clicks on — the hard-core images being the booth's only light source, apart from the glowing red button used to switch channels. The on-screen smut is the usual fodder (minus hard S&M and fisting, which is generally edited from viewing tapes; you have to purchase mail order for that stuff) and the volume is high. Too high. Being used to viewing pornography with the volume down so as not to alert the neighbours, this is rather unsettling. Even more unsettling is the fact that the wall mounted corner seat is a little damp and as my eyes compensate for the dark I discover two very real, flesh and blood, fully erect penises protruding from glory holes at either side of me. Not accustomed to giving relief to sex organs without their

accompanying bodies, i make my exit to favour a booth with walls that don't sprout penises.

After seeing umpteen ejaculations both on screen and in the booth next door, i leave City Entertainment for Folsom Gulch over the road, lightening my weight by a further \$2.00 in the process.

In comparison, the superior of the two is certainly City Entertainment. The back room is large, has two viewing booths (for viewing full-length video films chosen from the store) and a 10-booth video arcade with around 10 different hard-core channels. All booths are together in the centre of the room, there is a separate toilet/washroom (which is rather blocked) and one of the black walls is painted with neon planets and asteroids (there's probably a tired old Uranus joke in there somewhere). Four of the booths are so-called "buddy booths" where a frosted glass screen separating the cubicles slides away when a token is inserted, allowing you to "share the experience". Now, these booths seem a pretty damn good idea, but the truth of the matter is that most people don't bother with them, choosing instead the glory-holes drilled between each and every booth, or simply squeezing in with someone else. The same applies to Folsom Gulch, only their backroom is much smaller and much grimmer; filthy in fact. Your feet stick to the floor and by the smell of things, an alcove leading to an emergency exit is where many a bursting bladder has emptied. On a hot day it's enough to make you gag!

Stepping out for some fresh air, i head up to Market Street to find the 1808 Club, a private members "jack-off" club and one of the few remaining bath house type establishments outside the Berkeley area. It's a long walk past all the straight sex theatres, the Strand cinema (which mid-week shows triple-bills of cult classics like **Caligula**, **Café Flesh** and **Tokyo Decadence** for a mere \$2.00) and the many loitering individuals. i walk right past the place a few times. Checking the street numbers, i finally get to number 1808 Market Street. There it is. A shoddy entrance betrays the fact that once inside you must take off all your clothes and wander around nude, wanking folk off! This dump looks like a garden shed attached to a larger building; only a hand written A4-size sign identifies the club. The sun is still bright and the place doesn't open 'til seven at night, but i decide not to return after dark. This having everything to do with the area being very heavily graffitied and my discovery of a static, sun-baked, non-breathing transient sprawled from his body to the gutter. Disturbed and shaken by the sight, i return to base, leaving my search for sex for another day and avoiding Market Street like the plague for the rest of my holiday.

Well prepared and void of any valuables, my next destination is deep within San Francisco's most crime ridden ghetto, the Tenderloin. Deep in the bowels of Adonis Video on Ellis Street is the Circle J Cinema. With three screens, much on show is traditional hard-core. However, the smallest is reserved for those rare and wonderful film loops of yesteryear. At only \$8.00 for three hours of such archive material, the other two

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screens are hardly worth a look, especially the one showing only boring masturbation videos. Its well publicised "jack-off room" has been the setting for quite a number of pornographic videos, but is really only of interest as we the punters are actually billed as a live show in various newspaper ads. That's one way of avoiding having to book expensive strippers, I suppose! Not falling for the pay-to-perform con trick, I check out Falcon Video's follow-up to the excellent **The Abduction** video. This actually proves a huge disappointment: **The Conflict** is boring, tame and censored!

Quite sick of video tape and celluloid, I walk on down Jones Street, wanting bare flesh before my eyes. The Campus Theatre is only a few minutes from Circle J, the short journey however can be somewhat precarious. Eye contact with those loitering is not advised! Thanks to some scab encrusted black man showing me the mechanics of his four inch flick knife, I never do make it to the Campus Theatre. Shame. Its shows feature masturbating in the shower and multiple ejaculation, all live on stage. It also boasts a dark-room for those anonymous

fumbblings with unscrupulous pick-pockets. Nor do I make it to Polk Street's notorious Austin Alley aka Hustler Heaven, viewing the street from behind the locked doors of a taxi instead, driven by my very own Travis Bickle. Only the day before I had read in the **Bay Area Reporter** of a gay gang rape on Austin Alley, and so choose not to explore on foot. I exit my taxi only when returning to the sanity of Union Square. Taking a walk up Powell Street towards Chinatown I encounter, quite by chance, the "worlds largest male sex emporium under one roof". Nob Hill Theatre. Nob Hill, just off Powell on Bush Street, is the most expensive, but heck what a venue! Admission to the massive 30-booth video arcade situated in the basement is \$5.00. But this arcade includes San Francisco's only three- and four-way buddy booths and also boasts a "star booth" which is fitted with a camera that other punters can tune in to. A sure-fire way of getting your proverbial 15 minutes. Back upstairs, and to the right of the image and poster-packed foyer, are the jack-off theatres where many a porn star has shot his load. Admission to the entire complex is \$20.00, but with so much going on it's tempting to forget there's a

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world outside. The sun was bright when I entered but is long gone when I step back out onto the quiet street.

After pausing to eat in a tiny and somewhat expensive Italian restaurant, I walk down to Eddy Street, just off Market and almost full circle from my first destination. The Tearoom Theatre is surrounded by more street sleaze. In its security conscious foyer is a box-office, cigarette machine and piles of free newspapers which you can collect without obligation. I wish I had come here first because of this. All films here are video projections. The admission fee includes a free locker and the brave can audition on any week day with the possibility of a low-paid part-time stripping job. But it's neither daytime or during the week and I don't have the looks or the stamina to strip for cash. I had just spent hours at the Nob Hill Theatre and let's face it, there can indeed be too much of a good thing! Is it possible to O.D. on such stuff? Tempted, I resist. Looking out through the bars, life resembles a Tod Browning film. Freaks of nature fighting, loving, vomiting and shooting-up in the red light. It's a congregation I don't wish to encounter after midnight so I take a run for it.

Back in the hotel I flick through the literature I have accumulated: pissed-off at the venues missed and amazed by the graphic contact ads. I wish I could extend my testosterone tour, but all good things must come to an end. Relaxing on the final eve in the city that promises and delivers, I recline and puff on a cigarette. Post coital? Certainly not! I never get laid on a first date!

SHARING THE EXPERIENCE: POSTSCRIPT

Following the completion of the above article, a good friend brought to my attention the existence of an interesting little Tenderloin bar called The Swallow. I have no address, the place probably doesn't exist today, but a mid-Eighties visit went as follows.

The couple, new to the city, entered through a side-street door into an almost pitch-black room fitted with only a few seats and a bar. Being non-drinkers of alcohol, two cokes were ordered. The barman took his time and the drinks were expensive. When glass touched lip it became obvious the vessels were actually jam-jars. The only other customer sat at the far end of the bar sniffing poppers. His hand swinging the little bottle drunkenly. This elderly gent then left his seat to visit the toilet, never to return! Intrigued by this, the tourist couple followed only to find an empty rest room with no points of exit. Baffled, they left.

When enquiring with locals about The Swallow, most were horrified the couple had paid it a visit. Why? The toilet was fitted with a false wall that led to a dungeon. The most extreme in San Francisco, where men were chained, bound and gagged for your pleasure. You were permitted to do anything to these naked slaves. And I mean anything! Rumour has it that some poor guy actually died during a sexual assault in there. The owners and other regulars simply rolled his cold and naked body out into the back street. Business as usual! ■

the headpress guide to modern culture

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ALTERNATIVE CINEMA NO.8

[\$4.95 cover. E.I. Communications, PO Box 625, Lodi, NJ 07644, USA]

Admittedly, we didn't hold out much hope for **Alternative Cinema**, an independent film review zine edited by king of video swill himself, J.R. Bookwalter (**The Dead Next Door**, **Ozone**). But actually sitting down and perusing the thing we were pleasantly surprised. While it is a rather lavish springboard for Bookwalter's own productions (his latest, **The Sandman**, takes pride of place on the cover and grabs a two-page review in issue No.8), it doesn't necessarily think they're any good (his **Humanoids From Atlantis** "stinks"). **Alternative Cinema** covers a lot of other stuff too, such as the current state of porn in the USA, the trials and tribulations of shoot-

ing a low-budget production for Todd Tjersland (**Legion of the Night** — "Always be prepared for the worst. I mean, the absolute *worse* you could possibly imagine."), and of course carries reviews for films by every clod that managed to operate a camera with the lens cap off. This is the "Your Movies... Our Opinions" section, the backbone of the mag, devoting 20-plus pages to the likes of Tim Ritter's **Creep** ("...features a performance by Tom Karr, the producer of **Deranged**...") and Gary Whitson's **Zombie Holocaust** ("...a number of mud-wrestling and wet T-shirt scenes..."). You know some of these must be *seriously* bad when they're listed, not in the main reviews section, but under the sub-header "Camcorders Should *Still* Be illegal!" A great source for movies you'd rather read about than watch.

MAMA SNAKE NO.2 & NO.4 ONE SUMMER DAY

[Info: C. Campbell, 4100 Lake Wash. Blvd. N, #B202 Renton, Wa 98056, USA]

These comic books are drawn and — I would envisage — manufactured by Chris Campbell. They're printed on heavy paper, comb bound, and look great. They're also pretty funny too. His drawing style is vibrant and not unlike early Savage Pencil. The (non-)stories are intense and ridiculously vile. 'Lunis' (the opening strip in **Mama Snake No.2**) is the story of Jamesy, whose obese wife Lunis goes mental when he refuses to rub her feet. It's a smouldering mental: inane grin, non-conversation at the dinner table. Finally Lunis explodes, accusing Jamesy of pissing on the toilet seat, and torturing him until dead. He is left with a two-foot long needle inserted down his penis. 'Dr Picklehead' (that same issue) concerns an excitable house-calling doctor. He convinces a patient with a headache that an operation is necessary, but part way through the procedure the doctor admits that he hasn't a clue what he's doing and leaves. Several more house-calls follow. The final panel has a concussed father with a foetus hanging from the end of his penis. There isn't a development as such in these stories, they seem to just start and escalate within seconds into hyper-absurdity. Women are either fat and dominant or G-stringed lap-dancers. Men are backward Texans, too numb to actually drop down dead when they should but bumbling through several episodes of mayhem — usually butt-naked — before falling X-eyed into the dirt. **One Summer Day** is a Campbell book-length strip, a convoluted tale about childhood trauma, beer drinking, blow-up dolls, cop shows on TV, flowers, love and understanding... had you fooled there for a minute, eh? Enquire about all of Campbell's stuff. Once you've read one you'll want more.

ANGELS IN DISTRESS NO.1

[Info: C. Campbell, 4100 Lake Wash. Blvd. N, #B202 Renton, Wa 98056, USA]

Chris Campbell also contributes a strip and several spot illustrations to the debut issue of **Angels in Distress**, a collaboration venture with Greg Goodsell. Those who recall

the zine **Subhuman** should be familiar with the name Goodsell, one of the mainstay writers of that classy publication. However, judging by the self-importance lauded upon himself in this most recent outing, Greg must have taken a knock on the head in the interim. Sure, Goodsell's film flotsam sensibilities are still attuned, with coverage of Al Adamson and the likes of **The Adjuster** and **Hollywood Meatcleaver Massacre**, but that hardly warrants celebrity status ("...I had achieved name recognition and value to the point where people asked me for autographs at Fangoria Conventions..." Greg decides in his editorial). Goodsell is a fine writer to be sure, funny, with some interesting off-kilter observations on tired movies, but when the essence of self-righteousness creeps in — as it does here — you really feel it's time to re-discover the Rubik cube and do something useful with your time. As for Campbell, it must have been hell working in the shadow of such an awesome presence.

VOLUPTUOUS APRIL 1995 & JULY 1996

[Newsstand distribution]

For lovers of girls who are 'full of figure'. Not so as to be actually 'fat', just plump or big boned.

zines

Okay, fat. 'All Stacked! All Natural!' decries the subheading on this State-side publication, and of the two issues under review here, the models leave a smidgen to be desired by way of 'good-looks'. It's full colour throughout in real cellulite-o-vision with the likes of Chelsea rippling beneath latex ("I didn't think, in my wildest dreams, that these pictures would ever get published"). Cast your vote for the coveted 'Big Breast Challenge'!

With each issue readers are encouraged to vote on who has the 'best boobs of all-time'. The July 96 heat is between Lisa Phillips and Cassandra; a caped Elvira-clone (kind of) vs. the fretful aunt-type. Yummy. Being US-based, things are that much more raunchy for a soft-core mag. Not to mention about as erotic as watching your mother take a shower. Look at blonde-haired Rhonda's big fat ass in granny-like pants as she does the vacuum cleaning! Turn over the page and see how, overcome with excitement, she's sticking the nozzle of the vacuum on her tummy, pulling flesh skywards! (Luckily she isn't using a Dyson.) Then she simply has to cut holes in the tips of her bra so that her nipples stick through! There are a lot of shots of women



eating cream cakes. Rhonda takes a respite by shoving a whole cream slice in her mouth. Later in the mag, Krisztina (from Hungary) poses with a candy covered donut in one hand, a chocolate finger in the other and a whipped cream mountain on her butt. Indeed the photo spread for July features Krisztina with a cake on each knee. But without doubt, my personal fave moment in **Voluptuous** comes by way of a piece of verbiage: 'A Trip To The Gynaecologist With The Ideal Woman!' in answer to a question posed by a 'C.J. from Sacramento', intrepid columnist Rachel Norman relates her own personal experiences... "the doctor sticks an Instrument in the twat area called a 'speculum', which is cold, metal and sorta 'opens wide' for the doctor."

SHOCK CINEMA NO.8

[US \$5 / Rest \$6. c/o Steve Puchalski, PO Box 518, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009, USA]

This is one of the healthiest film review zines going. **Shock Cinema** is that rare beast able to cover the most diverse material and by so doing imbue it with a common underlying thread. Movies as diametrically opposed as **Expresso Bongo** (yes, the old Cliff Richard thing) and **Rapeman** are 'Shock Cinema' movies, simply because they're here, reviewed in **Shock Cinema**. That might sound like a rather obvious argument, but it's a point of fact that simply doesn't carry for the majority of review zines on the market. For them, the films remain as their genre defines them: musical, manga, horror, thriller, etc. Anyway, **Shock Cinema**... The latest issue covers big budgeters like the Ringo Starr Western **Blindman**; independents like J.R. Bookwalter's **The Sandman**; and obscurities like Werner Herzog's documentary on televangelist Dr Gene Scott, **God's Angry Man**. ('Even when he gets the dough, he still screams that his lazy, cheap viewers didn't cough it up quickly enough') Do yourself a favour.

EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA NO.13 & NO.14

[4-issues US \$20 / Rest \$35. ETC, PO Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325, USA]

One of the more informative and entertaining specialist film

publications, **ETC** rarely fails to unearth some celluloid weirdness with each issue. Of course old favourites get a look-in too, but editor Craig Ledbetter has a keen ear for separating the wheat from the chaff and doesn't suffer fools gladly — that is, familiar films are in because the reviewer has something interesting to say. Where else are you going to find a breakdown of the Italian 'Mark the Narc' series? It's territory too esoteric and too retentive even for the likes of **Psychotronic Video**, issue No.13 features interviews with William Berger, the square-jawed 'star' of much Italian exploitation (**Devil Fish**, **The Ironmaster**), and Aïx de la Iglesia, the first question of which — without so much as an introduction — is 'How did you come up with the idea of chasing the devil?'. There is also a lengthy set report from Jean Rollin's **The Two Vampire Orphans**. **ETC** No.14 is the tribute to Lucio Fulci issue. 'He died on March 13, 1996, from diabetic shock after eating a piece of cake before bed-time,' writes Howard Berger. 'Definitely better than getting a drill press shoved into his brain or vomiting up his entire intestinal track, I think he would agree.' (!?) Reviews this time around include **Singapore Sling**, a contemporary film noir from Greece, in which a down-at-heel private eye gets embroiled in a case where genders are not what they seem and everyone vomits a lot. Not forgetting 'dentist turned director' Leon Klimovsky's **Night of the Walking Dead**. Whatever the plot, in Euro trash female skin must be displayed. **Walking Dead** is no exception. Writes Charles Bucklin of the infirm Emma Cohen: '...yes, she does get naked revealing the healthiest sick person's body I have ever seen.'

PROHIBITED MATTER NO.5

[Aus \$5 cover. Rod Marsden, PO Box 19, Spit Junction, NSW 2088, Australia]

This zine from Australia deals in crime, sci fi and horror fiction — subjects lending themselves nicely to editor Rod Marsden's sense of psycho-sexual excess. Don't worry too much about characterisation here, it's left by the wayside in lieu of long, descriptive passages detailing mutilation (of the female). A good case in point is 'Sociopath' one of Marsden's own



contributions to issue No.5. The tale — a virtual précis of John Fowles' **The Collector**, but with more murder — concerns one Peter Mantis, a bitter and twisted bachelor whose job as photographer of models lands him in the company of many young, career-minded girls. As can be expected, all of womankind is scum and forced to atone for their sins. Mantis drives his victims to his secluded shack and tortures them to death. Jenny, tied to a cross and stripped of her clothing, is despatched thus:

Without warning he thrust the apple up her vagina until bleeding was evident. A Great tremor shook her young frame, a gust of air escaped her contracting lungs and then a moan which evolved into a wail echoed off the brick walls. He shoved a ball gag in her mouth and left her to suffer.

He returned after an hour with a jug of water with which to revive her and three apples. The water slapped against her face and brought a new tremor to her fragile body. There was little movement, however, as the apples were crowded in and, after the third, profuse bleeding indicating oncoming death. The fourth apple took the piece of the now broken ball gag. He sewed up her expanding and badly slit vagina with a threaded needle and shaved the triangle of hair which was now blood smeared...

More girls follow — fanciful descriptions of subjugation, youthful beauty, and death being the whole purpose of the story. In S. Carter's 'Blasphemer', a schoolboy is pun-

ished for drawing lewd pictures in class. Later, at dinnertime, he happens upon the eponymous title creature, a 'seductive siren and a beast of prey', who assists him in his revenge: with Blaspheron at his side, the boy fucks, buggers and generally defiles and mutilates his class teacher and the school principle, a satanic orgy that ultimately stretches to include all the other pupils in his class.

All of this is suitably distracting in a mindless, cod-DeSade kind of way. Despite the misogynist-excess of most of the material here — which gives **Prohibited Matter** the appearance of a masturbation fantasy by the local social misfit, no girl friends because of his warts — at least it can't be described as being *dull*. The tales that *do* forsake the 'horror-torture' format, however, are maudlin. Take for instance, Pauline Scarf's 'His Shining Armour', with Sir Tristan Osborne and company legging it around the countryside exchanging dialogue straight out of **Captain Pugwash**...

DELIRIUM: THE ESSENTIAL REFERENCE GUIDE TO DELIRIOUS CINEMA NO.4

[Available through Headpress]

With issue No.4, this entertaining investigation into Italian cinema reaches the year 1981. Twelve months of celluloid horror, crime and filth culminating in a myriad of familiar and not-so-familiar titles. Here you will find the likes of Lucio Fulci's **Black Cat**, Umberto Lenzi's **Cannibal Ferox**

(incidentally, the shot of Zora Kerowa, her breasts skewered with meat hooks, has recently been seen in newsgroup smut pages under the posting 'hookbabe'). Alan Birkinshaw's **Horror Safari**, Ovidio Assonitis' **Med-house**, and Lee Castle's **Watch Out For Those Two... Nymphomaniacs** (not it's actual title, but the one we like best). Comprehensive production notes are followed by a synopsis and one or two informed reviews. Also Included In this issue are interviews with directors Luigi Cozzi, Antonio Margheriti, Michele Soavi, and Joe D'Amato, with a couple of filmographies thrown in for good measure. Here's the kind of devotion

to detail and retentiveness that a major publishing house would scoff at. Excellent.

BOMBA MOVIES NO 3 & NO 4

[Free for an SAE. Dark Carnival, 17 Cottage Beck Road, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire, DN16 1LQ]

They don't make 'em like this anymore — real cheap looking with text and graphics falling all over themselves. But then who's gonna feel burned by something that costs nowt (beyond the price of a postage stamp)? **Bomba Movies** — which carries no editorial or writing credits — is 16 pages of movie reviews set to a cut-up barrage of images pilfered from every hip source imaginable. (Someone has a cool collection of underground comics.) Issue 3 covers a bunch of eclectic stuff, from exploitation to porn filth, from **Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things** to **Traci Lords Is... Aroused**. Issue 4 has a theme: 'blaxploitation'. Nothing at all taxing or in-depth here; it's all light-hearted, throw-away — or drop-in-the-bathable — stuff. If the reviews don't turn you on, or you can't find them amidst the graphics, have a go at trying to identify as many of the puréed images and captions as you can. My favourite comes courtesy of — what appears to be — a line from a sex ad: 'EAT SMELLY KNICKERS.' Yup.

PORCO MONDO: EUROPEAN EROTIC ENTERTAINMENT

[Available through Headpress]

This purports to be a debut issue, but I wouldn't cancel the milk in anticipation of the next number. I'd like to see more, but not necessarily because **Porco Mondo** has a finger on the pulse of

the European sex industry. My reasons for taking a liking to the thing are rather more left-field than that. For one, the films under review tend to be a decade out of date; secondly, there is a good degree of laughable English-as-a-second-language writing (the first line of text in the magazine is 'The art name of this Italian actress doesn't want to remind the notorious Lucrezia, sister of Cesare Borgia Duke of Valentino, she who poisoned her lovers by order of her brother'); thirdly, the veil of secrecy which cloaks the editor and publisher gives **Porco Mondo**

the feel of a leaked MIS document; and fourthly — the best part — I don't believe for a nano-second that the selection of titles under review is a fair representation of European porn movies... are mainstream audiences so obsessed with bestiality!? I think not. Mr Dan — reviewer of most titles in **Porco Mondo** — Pydynkowski! Let's see: horse or dog fucking footage appears in almost 50% of Italian porn movies if this seemingly random selection is anything to go by. Dan feigns disgust whilst describing in detail scenes of women masturbating horses and going at it with 'German Sheppards' [sic]. His writing is pedestrian, sometimes funny (funny in that it's pedestrian), but he has an exuberance for his subject matter. Take the following, from Dan's review of **La Donna Delle Bestie** [d: Salvo E. Martin]:

Despite being almost humorous watching a mutt screw a female 'doggie' style, it gets nasty when the dog is heid on it's back so one of the women can ride him. The disgusting nature of these clips has an erotic effect on the bionde watching them, as she quickly begins masturbating (cue to close-up of her eyes and her vagina).

Also featured are interviews with porn stars Luana Borgia ('the art name of this Italian actress...') and the late-Moana Pozzi. But it's Dan who really saves the day, if not for his wild and wanton coverage of the more esoteric European sex movies, **Mondo Porco** would have to be relegated to the bin marked 'Get a fucking Seeling-Eye Dog for that Proof Reader and Typesetter — Quick'. The magazine is nicely produced, with



books

more than its fair share of colour, and covers interesting ground, but it's all very nearly in vain simply because no one down the line has stopped to actually read and check the thing before going to press.

DEATH SCENES: A HOMICIDE DETECTIVE'S SCRAPBOOK

Ed. Sean Tejaratchi
[220pp, Feral House. Available through Headpress]

A battered head with a gag in its mouth is propped up for the camera. Beneath it, shakily written in uppercase, is the caption **KILLED BY BANDIT**. Next to it sits a second picture, a man, again propped up, wearing a hat, eyes staring beyond the camera. **"SAME" BANDIT KILLED BY POLICE** the caption here reads. Elsewhere, the torso of Mrs Dorothy Lee Eggers, age 41, lies on a slab, her head and hands chopped off by

her husband jealous of **MRS EGGERS ASSERTED DALLIANCE WITH OTHER MEN**. Miss Samuelson, cut-up by the "Arizona Tiger Woman" in order that her body may fit into a trunk, lies on the slab stitched back together like some macabre human tapestry. James P. Watson, a hermaphrodite who **MARRIED TWENTY FIVE WIVES AND KILLED SIXTEEN OF THEM**, displays his genitals for the camera. The Red Lipstick Murder Case has a 40-year-old victim naked and **STOMPED TO DEATH BY A FIEND WHO CRUELY PRINTED AN OBSCENE PHRASE (FUCK YOU) ON HER CHEST**. A boy and girl are discovered literally blown to pieces after finding and playing with dynamite. Victor Whealand **FELL A SLEEP IN THE BATH TUB AND DROWNED**. A man's brains spill from his opened skull, the victim of suicide. Several other suicide victims, dead through hanging, are held under the collective caption **JUST A LITTLE THROAT TROUBLE...**

It'd be all too easy to crack a gag and suggest that **Death Scenes** is the book one might expect to find on the coffee table of the family Addams, but then again it wouldn't be a suggestion completely removed from the truth. Okay, it has nothing what-

soever to do with Charles Addams. However, it is a collection of photographs — bodies in the morgue, crime scenes, medical anomalies, shots of suicide victims and so forth — as collected by Jack Huddleston, a homicide detective with the LAPD from the 1930s to the 1950s. He pasted them into a huge scrapbook which ultimately measured in at 18" x 24" by six inches thick. Feral House's **Death Scenes** reprints 230 of the photos in a more accessible volume, complete with captions originally furnished in Huddleston's hand-written scrawl, and with an added introduction by Katherine Dunn.

The public got their first taste of Huddleston's scrapbook in 1989, courtesy of Nick Bougas' film **Death Scenes**, in which the photographs were supplemented with a narrative by Anton LaVey. In **Death Scenes**' literary incarnation, Dunn's 'narrative' is not only more pertinent but thankfully kept separate from the main body of work — allowing the images, and Huddleston's own perfunctory captioning, to speak for themselves. This introductory essay is itself fascinating, offering compelling hypothesis on the man behind the collection. (Though they were approached on the subject of Huddleston, the LAPD wouldn't allow any 'archaeological excavation' for the purpose of a mere book.) Painting in a backdrop of crime and era, against which the pictures take on greater perspective, Dunn (author of **Geek Love**) attempts to decipher the nature of the man who takes to assimilating such photographs in his spare time. For a hobby. "We can imagine him coming home from work with a manila envelope," writes Dunn, "tossing it on a dresser or desk. He would wait until after supper to open the envelope, to arrange and label his latest find. Did he share this hobby with his wife? Did he frighten his children with these images and the stories that went with them? Or was it his private pornography, locked away until he was alone in the house for a few hours?"

The detective wasn't compiling 'evidence' or case histories. Not all of the snaps in his scrapbook are from cases that Huddleston was working on, some aren't cases at all but feature the likes of shrunken heads from Borneo, Siamese cats, obese people, and victims of leprosy. Photographs that aren't of a

professional capacity but simply of interest to Huddleston. It was a fascination no doubt fuelled by the job of homicide detective, and at the same time a job that exonerated the collection from merely being a morbid curiosity or a 'dangerous' hobby (imagine a postal worker or a centre-lathe turner compiling such a scrapbook without raising suspicion).

This is no easy book to cut through. It's compelling and horrible in a deep down way, touching upon human frailty and inhuman behaviour. Knife wounds are deep; gunshot blasts devastating; babies tossed into rivers. There are no clean and tidy deaths here; no TV-movie apology for a dead body — if Mrs Marple was to walk into any one of these true-life cases she'd suffer a coronary. The book also manages to hit the viewer in a way that Bougas' film could not — the medium of film somehow juxtaposing Huddleston's dog-eared b/w photographs into a world a million light-years from home.

Death Scenes is a landmark piece and will cause waves one way or another. Feral House haven't just pushed at the boundaries with this one, they've kicked in a couple of doors. Something has changed with the publication of this book — quite what that might be only time will tell.

FREAK LIKE ME: INSIDE THE JIM ROSE CIRCUS SIDESHOW

Jim Rose with Melissa Rossi
[224pp £6.99 Indigo]

Pin cushion really got them in his eye. That was a faint-jerker."

A faint, to Jim Rose, is a falling ovation. Little more than 10 years ago, age 28, he was selling cars and exterminating bugs for a living in Phoenix, Arizona. Now Jim Rose is the head of a travelling circus freak troupe, resurrecting the old carny side-show tradition and delivering it to millions of people world-wide. A logical progression if you think about it. As a boy in junior high, Rose would hawk soft drinks at the local fair during the summer breaks. Day-in, day-out, he heard nothing but the repetitive, hypnotic banter of the barkers as they drew in their crowds. "Big Bertha, she's big, she's fat, she's happy — ha ha ha. Takes six guys to hug her and a box car to lug her. Big Bertha, she's big, she's



fat, she's happy — ha ha ha. Takes six guys to hug her and a box car to lug her." On leaving school, stuck in jobs he didn't much care for, Rose got the notion that he would go to Europe to meet street entertainers and learn their trade.

Freak Like Me charts the meteoric rise of the Jim Rose Circus, as told by the Ringmaster himself. It's no less the inside story of a cultural phenomenon (but don't let that put you off), with Rose coming over as a witty, likeable, down-to-earth, Rock 'n' Roll kind of guy.

In 1990, fresh back from Paris with his new wife Bebe, armed with a bunch of eye-popping tricks, Rose got himself a patch on Venice Beach. Knocking nails up his nose, breathing fire and having his head ground into broken glass for dimes and quarters collected in a hat.

So I was having a horrible time getting a crowd. My shows became only practice; even Bebe was bored being my sole fan as I ran through my routine over and over, waiting vainly for an audience to gather. By the afternoon Bebe looked dejected, fingering designs in the sand. I noticed they were arrows, all pointing down. She refused to stand on my head. "What's the point?" She asked. "Nobody's looking."

From Venice Beach, Jim and Bebe moved to Seattle — a city only months away from going into the stratosphere with the 'grunge' music thing. Out of desperation, Rose hit on the idea of performing his act in a friend's restaurant (!), itself in need of a boost. The show was a success.

More restaurants followed and more and more people began turning up to watch. Out of these audiences emerged several of the key players who would later pack up their day jobs and join Jim on the road — Pin-cushion, Matt the Tube, The Amazing Mr Lifto. The Jim Rose Circus Sideshow was born. TV coverage followed, as did a slot on the Lollapalooza tour in 1992. Two years later, opening for Nine Inch Nails at Ball State University, the circus played to a crowd of 17,000.

The latter part of the book is taken up with the European tour, and the troupe's controversial visit to Britain (if Sooty and Sweep were Japanese, HM Customs would have trouble letting them in). Here, the tabloids had a field day and Tory MPs called for a ban after yoo-f programme **The Word** screened Mr Lifto dangling irons from his penis. In Holland, a woman came back-stage and blew fire between her legs, aided by a lit candle in her vagina. In France, suffering a fever, Jim hammered a nail up his nose... but badly. In Scandinavia, members of the audience thought the whole point of the show was to try and be more disgusting than the act itself.

Wanting to be a geek out of design would seem a pretty strange desire. But how about wanting to be a world-famous geek — could that be classed as a more normal preoccupation? And while chugging down other people's vomit might not be everyone's idea of a groovy night out, the sheer, honest-to-goodness feel-good quota of **Freak Like Me** could make you consider it worth a try. Great.

THE EYES: EMETIC FABLES BY THE ANDALUSIAN DE SADE

Jesús Ignacio Aldapuerta

Translated by Lucia Teodora

[96pp Critical Vision, 1995. Available through Headpress]

Duality. You, reading this, are an intelligent, mobile unit of unique genetic individuality and incredible organic sophistication... and you're a slab of meat. Aldapuerta's necrokitsch operates somewhere inside the seismic shift from one state to the other: Individuality becomes totally objectified and ceases to exist in a dehumanised cataloguing of limbs and organs for detached exploration, amputation, and meticulous mutilation. **The Eyes** are 'emetic fables by the Andalusian de Sade': not so much **Tales from the Crypt** as tales from the crypto-zoic.

Born in Seville around 1950, and immersed from his adolescence onwards in a morbid erotic perversity of blood and semen, foulness

and corruption, Aldapuerta died at 27, possibly HIV positive, probably as a self-incinerating suicide. He left these

grotesquely scatological fictions for Critical Vision to salvage into English, 10 short texts of perverid nastiness encompassing intricate arrangements of literary atrocity. There's a kind of **Apocalypse Now** political allegory to the necrophile 'Indochine':

He was fucking not the under-nourished body of a teenage whore, but an entire nation. In her he was fucking all the recent dead, all the thousands, the tens of thousands killed in the week since he had last fucked a dead Vietnamese whore.

More often, **The Eyes'** dark masturbatory dreams occur in an amoral vacuum, appalling 'fantasies' committed 'to the dry reality of his closed hand'. 'Orpheus' conjures a hypnotic mood of compulsive predestination leading inexorably to a fetished Ballardian autowreck and the unsettling strangeness of self-immolation and oral sex with a severed head. In 'Armful', a paedophile devours a child's corpse to destroy the evidence of her sex-murder, while 'BVM' is a delicious sadistic exposition on the universality of pain and the means by which the torturer-



narrator destroys the minds of his victims. 'Ikarus' draws the atmospheric dislocation still further into surreal weirdness as an airborne sadist crashes into a cathedral-vast World War II bomber where a naked woman is 'nailed, clamped, impaled, pierced' into a mechanised human sculpture, an eviscerating physical collage described with a clinical detachment that's beyond horror. She's intravenously fed blood to replace what she's copiously losing through multiple lacerations, gouges and rents. There are fish swimming in her blood supply. The prose is not Gothic in tone but art-technological in its detailed portrayal of death, dismemberment and mental disease. Aldapuerta is a serial offender of designer nihilism: he tells his black pornographic truth until our minds bleed. His book is slim, but fastidiously disturbing. [AD]

GEORGE CRUIKSHANK'S LIFE, TIMES AND ART (VOL.2: 1835-1878)

Robert L. Patten

[£45 657pp The Lutterworth Press, PO Box 60, Cambridge, CB1 2NT]

Have you ever typed 'star trek' into your trusty internet search-engine and hit return? Me neither. But you can just imagine what would happen if you did. In fact, it must be rather like confronting this book. It's 657 pages long, printed on the kind of thick, expensive paper that means it could quite easily see off a small, sturdy mammal with a single blow, and it's only half of the

biography. OK, at least George Cruikshank, an illustrator who's most famous for his work on **The Pickwick Papers** is interesting. With pictures like one called 'The Gutter Children' — a foreshadowing of the mass graves and bulldozers of 1945 — he's even interesting from the strictly **Headpress**-ean point of view. But is he this interesting? And if you can answer "yes" to that question, I don't think you'd necessarily find him so filtered through Robert L. Patten's prose:

Cruikshank's tactics in this dispute are not very clear. That he wanted to relieve himself of the burden of reading through a whole issue in order to find a subject seems plain enough; and since he could not do so until the make-up of the next issue was fixed, presumably he wanted more time for executing his etching than such a procedure would allow.

[pg. 155 — by *sortes Pattenicae*]

For Patten, you see, is a Professor of English, and Professors of English are not as other professional men. Or women. By and large, Professors of Mathematics have to be good at maths: *mutatis mutandis*, the same goes for Professors of Geology, Physics, Archaeology, French and even Music and Art. The same does not go for Professors of English. In fact, the rule seems to apply in reverse to them. O the day when the last EngLit graduate is strangled with the guts of the last prole! [SW]

FRAGMENTS OF FEAR: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF BRITISH HORROR FILMS

Andy Boot

[£12.95 284pp Creation Books, 83 Clerkenwell Rd, London, EC1M 5RJ]

When was the last time you picked up a book devoted to the history of British horror movies? Certainly, there is no shortage of magazine articles and essays on the subject, nor volumes devoted to the illustrious Hammer studios, but British horror *par se*? Surprising as it may be, **Fragments Of Fear** — the fifth entry into Creation's ongoing series of film genre studies — is the only work since David Pirie's **Heritage of Horror** (1973) to devote itself entirely to the subject. And for those who might be expecting a stiff-upper-lip, critical appraisal, well, thankfully, they'll be disappointed. This is an informal guide, with author Andy Boot reflecting upon little quirks and nuances in a film just as much as who might have directed what and when. For instance, he makes an issue of the frequency with which Boris Karloff lights up in **The Man Who Changed His Mind**, and how Tigon generally had "groovier soundtrack music" than other studios of the day. Chapters are given over to specific studios, such as Amicus, the aforementioned Tigon, Anglo-Amalgamated, Independent Artists, and Hammer. Other chapters focus upon individual decades and that old barnstormer himself, Tod Slaughter, whom is credited here as being the first British horror star.

Fragments Of Fear takes as the first British horror a five-minute short by one Dicky Winslow, who, in 1902, cranked his camera toward a theatre company re-enacting **Maria Marten, Or Murder In The Red Barn**. The last entry is 1995's **Shallow Grave**. To give some idea of where Boot's sensibilities lie, en route he determines Cy Roth's **Fire Maidens From Outer Space** to be "possibly the worse British movie ever made", and that Ian Merrick's **The Black Panther**, based on the Lesley Whittle murder case, as the "most horrific". Because Boot has a keen eye for pulp and Gothic fiction, his film history unfurls with a pleasing literary counterpoint. He also appears to have a keen musical sense, too, but unfortunately doesn't indulge himself on that particular score nearly as often (music on Gary



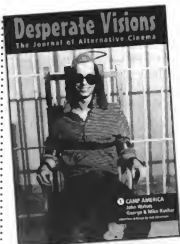
George Cruikshank, 'The Burning of Edward Underhill on the Tower Green.' Etching, August 1840.

Sherman's **Death Line**, for instance, was supplied in part by Will Malone "ex-member of psych legends *The Smoke* and *The Orange Bicycle*... and a progressive legend with *Moth-erlight*." Boot also notes that two of the characters in **Death Line** are listening to "progressive rock legends *Secondhand* on the record player." That's the kind of info sorely lacking in **Halfwells**...

Boot almost can't wait to get **A Clockwork Orange** out of the way so that he may tackle the likes of **The Corpse**, starring Michael Gough, which makes for far more interesting reading — who wants capsule comments on the overly familiar? **Fragments of Fear** wisely plays to more critically maligned fare. Movies discussed with no uncertain relish include obscurities like **The Ghost of Rashomon Hall**, a 1949 picture starring Valentine Dyall (in which production values are so poor that the hall of the title is spelled differently throughout and actors supposedly engaged in background banter in one scene can clearly be heard going "hmmmm, hurumm-mmm"), and Michael Armstrong's ugly-hippie horror extravaganza **Haunted House Of Horror** (Why does Dennis Price play a policeman who walks on and then off again? Because the producers insisted on 'writing in' a part for Boris Karloff, only he couldn't make it...).

Boot admits that he has a preference for productions made prior to and during the early-Seventies, and it can be no coincidence that with this era the book is at its best. When Boot actually begins to trawl beyond this period, things become scattershot. Though **Fragments of Fear** attempts to be a comprehensive study — an appendix offers to cover those titles missed from the main text, duh! — omissions become greater and more evident as the years roll on. Not trifling little things, either, but inexcusable stuff like the *whole* of the Norman J. Warren catalogue (oh, **Inseminoid**'s in there all right, but it isn't credited as being a British film...)! And there are plenty of others. Also, Boot's writing is needlessly repetitive, reiterating points not only on the same page, but often in the same paragraph and occasionally the same sentence.

Choice morsels are to be had here for sure, but approach **Fragments of Fear** as a selective history of British horror films and you'll enjoy it a lot more.



DESPERATE VISIONS 1: CAMP AMERICA — THE FILMS OF JOHN WATERS AND GEORGE & MICHAEL KUCAR

Jack Stevenson

[£11.95 256pp Creation Books, 83 Clerkenwell Rd, London, EC1M 5R]

John Waters is noted as saying that it was abstract colours "jumping around" on the screen that killed the Underground. It's ironic, but to many people the idea of underground cinema /s colours jumping around. A falsehood. Early underground practitioners had tales to tell and, indeed, aspired to emulate Hollywood mainstream in the telling of them. The most enduring works of 1960s and Seventies underground have been those films that adhere to some semblance of plot. John Waters — the most popular and bankable director to emerge from this period — always stuck steadfastly to a script and allowed little space for improvisation. Waters in turn acknowledges his debt to the more personalised films of George and Mike Kuchar, who occasionally avoided a script altogether but maintained an informal narrative nonetheless. It is upon these two groups of filmmakers — Waters and the brothers Kuchar — that Jack Stevenson focuses in the first volume of **Desperate Visions**, the Journal of Alternative Cinema. Stevenson conducted interviews with the principle players throughout the Eighties (which first appeared in **Pendemonium** magazine, now out of print) — a time when Waters was 'breaking through' with **Heirspray** and the Kuchars were... well, keeping a low

profile and watching tornadoes, basically. Hence, there is an enthusiasm and a freshness to the conversations, aided immeasurably by Stevenson's refusal to steer matters into cut-and-dry film-related topics. The first section covers Waters — the "sultan of sleaze" — opening with a succinct appraisal of his work ("He was as much a product of his generation as Jerry Garcia but the flip side of the coin"), followed by interviews with Waters, Divine, Mink Stole, Mary Vivian Pearce and Miss Jean Hill. (The conversation with Hill — the near-on 400lb black lady who hijacks a crowded bus in **Polyester** and pursues a gang of juvenile delinquents — is conducted shortly after her appearance in **Jumbo**, a porn magazine for "chubby chasers".) The second section of the book is devoted to the Kuchars.

The Kuchar brothers made films on budgets that rarely exceeded the cost of actual film stock and development. Their works have remained for the most part, the preserve of the few. **Hold Me While I'm Naked** and **Sins Of The Fleshpots**, possibly the best-known Kuchar films, still pale into commercial insignificance next to the works of Waters and Warhol. But the brothers have never sought that kind of exposure anyway. As Stevenson puts it in his essay 'The Day The Bronx Invaded Earth', the brothers, Mike in particular, were never motivated by "careerism". The impact they had on the underground, however, was such that while the brothers were taking a natural transitory step up from 8mm to 16mm stock, and the better detail and clarity that provided, other filmmakers were moving from 16mm down to 8mm, having 'discovered' that Kuchar intimacy. Lack of finance didn't mean that spectacle was out, just that it had to be done differently. Although **The Desperate And The Deep** was a drama at sea, it was set at night against a black background so that the only water necessary were cupfuls thrown at the actors intermittently, and a credit sequence shot through an aquarium.

George Kuchar also wrote and starred in Curt McDowell's **Thundercrack!**, "the world's only underground porno horror movie." Shot in stark b/w, this wordy feature with its bevy of strange, rasping bisexual characters, was not a hit with the dirty mac brigade — and it was too 'dirty' for a more generalised Art audience. George describes McDowell

as being mainly interested in "men's buns", but that he did also like to watch heterosexual couples humping. The one lasting image that George has of Curt McDowell, is, George states, "him one time when we went to the North Country by the beach, and he was standing in a field with flowers with his pecker dangling out." **Thundercrack!**, also awarded the tag of being "the most walked-out-of movie ever", takes up much of the latter part of the book in the guise of a very welcome career retrospective of its lead actress Marion Eaton.

An essential addition to any cineaste's bookshelf.

TORTURE GARDEN: FROM BODYSHOCKS TO CYBERSEX

Ed. David Wood

[£16.95 160pp Creation Books, 83 Clerkenwell Rd, London, EC1M 5R]

Here's a book that draws you back time and time again. There's not much text, just a lot of pictures — the ideal medicament for brain strain. (After two pages of metaphoric-tastic Introduction, you'll be glad there isn't much text.) **Torture Garden** is a photographic celebration recalling six years of the infamous London fetish club. (Torture Garden, in case you hadn't figured.) The book is divided between the work of two photographers: Jeremy Cadaver and Alan Sivroni, who were granted unprecedented access to TG events. The latter's snaps are of the portraiture variety, while Cadaver's show the club at play. Performance artists and punters, musicians and models — a colourful enough spectacle, at times genuinely inventive. Ogle the girl with the bra made from

medical bags filled with her own blood! Watch with nausea as Franko B suspends himself naked from the ceiling, his over-ripe colostomy bags threatening to burst and rain piss on everyone below! Cower from vaguely threatening figures with shaved heads and studded body parts! Squirm as genital piercings take place before your very eyes! Distance yourself from reckless individuals generating sparks with power grinding tools! (They never had those at Wigan Casino.) Surround your person with chafing rubber suits! Suffer fake flongs flapping in your face! Yes, a cornucopia of liberated dress sense and sex-clubbing in a post-Gothic style (sorry, thought I was back in the Introduction there for a moment), **Torture Garden** probably manages to say more about the whole fetish scene than a million words by half a dozen sympathetic writers ever could. It is equal measures eroticism and bravado, imagination and futility. This is a very attractive book; the people in it are having a good time.

LIFE IN THE WORLD OF WOMEN

Maxim Jakubowski

[£6.99 192pp Do-Not Press, PO Box 4215, London, SE23 2QD]

A controversial odyssey of pornography, crime and lust. Oh dear. Controversial. That's what Will Self is. And Tim Willocks. But what the hell: take your courage in both hands and try the book beneath the blurb, and you might soon find yourself taking one of those hands away for service elsewhere, because, yes, the porn ingredients of these stories-of-lust-and-longing are effectively done. Realistic eroticism, erotic realism, with the occasional intrusion of cystitis and menstruation into all the descriptions of big cocks pumping away inside textured cunt walls. Occasional incorporation. What with that, the bags of buggery, masses of muff-diving and heaps of head, is it sounding kinky enough for you? It should be, but be warned that Jakubowski could probably not get away with sweeping some occasionally clichéd writing under the cover-all doormat of post-modernist irony. This is also a book in which cold outdoors air is "like a slap in the face", in which a vagina looks like "some exotic flower", and in

which you can come across lines like this:

"*Guapa muchacha,*" he said in a strong Hispanic accent.

No, it doesn't quite achieve the solecistic splendour of an Iain Banks or a Brian Lumley, but it's a line to be treasured nonetheless. Overall though, imagine Stewart Home using characters with EngLit degrees from Cambridge, and you'll be some of the way there. [SW]

THE END OF TIME: FAITH AND FEAR IN THE SHADOW OF THE MILLENNIUM

Damian Thompson

[£16.99 345pp Sinclair Stevenson]

While many books have come out in the last few years attempting to chart some of the wilder excesses of human behaviour at the end of the second millennium — perhaps most notably Adam Parfrey's excellent **Apocalypse Culture** — none have before now given a systematic analysis of the millennial fervour crucial to an understanding of the cult practices and religious absurdities so widespread today.

This scholarly yet fascinating tome gives just that: it is divided into two parts, one dealing with pre-Twentieth Century apocalyptic expectations and the other specialising in contemporary deviant buffoonery, covering in painstaking detail the strange and terrible sagas of Waco, Aum Shinrikyo, and the Order of the Solar Temple, whose members all died in mysterious circumstances a few years ago. (Aum Shinrikyo is the Tokyo nerve gas cult whose leader is currently on trial, if anyone needs reminding.) Most journalistic endeavours covering topics like this are written by tabloid journalists and as such are lurid drivel, pandering to the baser expectations of the 'true crime' set; this, however, is refreshingly well-written, meticulously researched, and delivers more insightful analysis of any of the topics given above in a single chapter than you'll find in most complete books.

The inherent readability of these parts should be readily apparent; other chapters deal with the range and weight of belief in an imminent cosmic showdown in the Christian church, the current vogue for apocalyptic New Age cults, and an extensive history of such beliefs, including accounts of Fortean drama at the end





of the first millennium. The latter section is dry at times, but as the book is presenting itself as a definitive account, possibly for use by academics as well as the curious public, it's difficult to fault it for the overly scholarly tone it sometimes has. It also concentrates perhaps too explicitly on a Christian history, although this is arguably because the makeup of Christianity is simply more overtly apocalyptic than other religions, and Thompson's account of changing perceptions of time kept my interest up while wading through tale after tale of self-destructive cult behaviour.

It is the repetitive pattern of the lives and deaths of cults that is perhaps the most telling message to be drawn from the book. The template for the Waco disaster had been drawn up more than a thousand years before, even down to the harem-humping activities of its head man. As the author argues, if the authorities had consulted any relevant source for information prior to the siege, they would never have attacked the compound as they did; as it happens, the only people they did consult were criminal psychologists versed in drafting profiles of serial killers. It is clearly demonstrated here that only the thinnest line separates the beliefs of Koresh's followers and popular end-time beliefs all over the Christian world; the pervasive and straight-faced convictions of Satanic shenanigans as shown here are unwittingly hilarious until you consider the violence and prejudice that such beliefs invariably lead to, and Thompson deserves credit for drawing attention to this.

Highly recommended for its lucid and objective approach to usually

hysteria-inducing material, this is surely the definitive text on apocalyptic belief. [JM]

MOTHERFUCKERS: THE AUSCHWITZ OF OZ

David Britton
[250pp £14.95 Savoy, 279 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 4EW]

How shocking is 'shocking'? It's pretty wishy-washy if half the novels heralded as such are anything to go by. The entire book-reading world would, by now, be a mass of gibbering idiots with all the supposedly 'shocking' fiction out there. It's utter rot. There should be a separate language for critics. They call a book 'disturbing' and 'dangerous' and it means poop. There are exceptions, of course. Here's one. Police seized David Britton's novel *Lord Horror*, in 1989, and wanted it destroyed. Forget 'dangerous' in context of the Booker Prize for Fiction — that is dangerous with an official real-world safety stamp — *Lord Horror* was *frightening*. Now Britton has a new novel out, *Motherfuckers* — every bit as worrying.

Cast your mind back to the Nazi Death Camps. According to 'The Thirteenth Law of Faerie', every camp shall have its twins. Ub and Sub in Buchenwald, Amos and Andy in Ravensbruck, Fudge and Speck in Sobibor, Weary Willie and Tired Tim in Maidanek, Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum in Chelmno, and in Auschwitz, Meng and Ecker. The latter pair were rescued for 'research' purposes by Dr Mengele, who in turn gave them to the ubiquitous Lord Horror as a gift. If it's necessary to pin *Motherfuckers* to

a plot, let's say that the 'creep boys' Meng & Ecker are in search of their master. But that's almost beside the point. (Particularly as Horror's location is divulged to Meng at the opening of the novel, but he forgets.) The book is a surrealist fantasy, a nightmare, folding in upon itself one moment and erupting the next to offer a myriad vile avenues down which the reader may be taken. Here Herbie Schopenhauer is a little red Volkswagen surreptitiously coaxed into the shower rooms of Dachau, holding philosophical conversations with Elvis; Mr Toad (of Toad Hall) is hunting down leftover body parts in order to sell them off again; Bruce Springsteen has lost his arsehole in New Orleans; and, Bismarck, a stall holder on the market near Tib Street makes his living selling dodgy fruit, because his customers like the danger.

Manchester is the microcosm for this pre-decimalisation, *Radio Fun* universe. Sights familiar on that fair city's streets can be found in abundance here, in *Motherfuckers*, but — in typical dream fashion — they're *askew*. Piccadilly Station has become Toon Town. Mickey Mouse is shopping in the Arndale. Dead men reminisce with the living and ponder the nature of their own demise. It might be Heaven, more likely Hell. It's a world which sticks to the feet when the chase is on.

Prior to this book, Meng & Ecker featured regularly in the comic book series of the same name (also published by Savoy, issue No.1 of which is still down as obscene by law — see note). But with *Motherfuckers*, the mad characters, mad backdrops and mad situations shimmer to life with a spark that the comic medium fails to provide. Britton's prose is a delight.

The manner of the book is outwardly genial, hopeful and optimistic, but that said, there's a couple of loose wires which keep shorting out the system. A big muddy boot stomping on the clean carpet transmission.

"Caps off! Caps on!" The ritualistic call from the two SS men duetted with a frivolity incomprehensible to a normal human brain. The twin scratched his head. Bestial cruelties, unimaginable violence and damnable occurrences were so commonplace here, it was pointless writing a letter home.

The dying man stopped before Ecker, staring wordlessly. Maggots were already acrawling in his nostrils.

"Put your face straight," cautioned Ecker.

The man crumbled. Ecker dodged his vainly fluttering stick-like arms. The man seemed to melt all over the clay. Suddenly his body burst open. Parts of his intestines lay smoking, coiling on the outside of his stomach.

Bite marks were visible on the spilled organs.

Now here was a mystery new to Ecker — another conundrum offered to him for inspection by the killing grounds of Bikenau.

[Motherfuckers, p.214]

Lord Horror was accused of being anti-Semitic. It was cleared. Maybe the whole case — which effectively ended with Britton going to prison anyway — burst a vessel in the author's brain, for **Motherfuckers** is far more liberal with its ethnic abuse and slurs than that earlier book. But the Jews aren't the sole target here, everybody gets a shout. One early chapter has Meng, a superstar, with a following of underage groupies, getting up to perform his world famous comedy routine. Of course, as the sequence is none too subtly modelled on the controversial Mancunian comic, Bernard Manning, this time the police can hardly come down too heavily on Britton. After all, it was the Manchester police who were recently taken to task for having *hired* Manning to perform at one of their functions.

The chapter in question pounds relentlessly, with one sick joke after another. It is groan-inducingly humorous to begin with, then embarrassing, and, after about the hundredth gag, numbing. But Britton isn't simply going through the mo-

The book is a moral one without preaching morals. However, it does occasionally open itself — like a sore might under pressure — and allows the reader to peek within. The real *within*. One such break in the surface manifests on page 86:

A work of fiction that would do justice to the Holocaust must take as its first principle the shattering of chronology.

Dangerous. Like recreating rational thought from scratch. A very powerful book indeed.

NOTE The fifth instalment in Savoy's eight-part comic book series, **Reverberstorm**, is also now available. In July of this year, Savoy lost their appeal to a jury trial to decide whether comic titles of theirs, seized in 1991, are obscene. The charge of obscenity and the destruction order — made behind the closed doors of officiladom — still stands. Parliament has it that serious publishers of literature and art will get a jury trial if they ask for one. Savoy asked and were refused.

[illegible]

**LUSTMORD:
THE WRITINGS AND
ARTIFACTS OF MURDERERS**

Edited by Brian King
 [\$14.95 314pp Bloat, PO Box 254,
 Burbank, California 91503, USA]

Twenty-eight year-old Patrick Byrne strangled to death Stephanie Baird in a YWCA hostel in Birmingham, 23 December 1959. He then went down to the laundry

room and attacked Margaret Brown, hitting her with a stone secured in a bra. But she managed to drive him away. Twenty thousand men were interviewed; Byrne got nervous and confessed to the crimes when it was his turn. His conviction of murder was changed on appeal to that of manslaughter, on account of his being "sexual abnormal". Why is Patrick Byrne included in *Lustmord* with a body count of one and not, say, John Wayne Gacy, who killed a hell of a lot of people? Because Brian King has adopted a fascinating criteria for inclusion: these are "pleasure-killers" who have sought to decipher, compliment or embellish their misdeeds with artwork or writings. A creative expression in relation to the crimes or, as one prison writer notes, the killer's own "weapons of psychic survival." Naturally, you've got your Zodiacs and Gerard Schaefers, but there are also many less familiar protagonists, each proffering a personalised glimpse into the nature of the beast. And while a number of these scribes can conduct — ahem — a 'decent' story, many more can barely string a sentence together. Ironically, it is with the latter — in a R.D. Laing child-like innocence kind of way — that some of the choicest nuggets are to be had. For instance, by the body of Stephanie Byrne, Patrick Byrne left a note for the police which read: 'This was the thing I thought would never come.' Later, when explaining to the cops what he actually meant by that note, Byrne admitted that after the murder

I put the note in my pocket and went into the bathroom. I stood by the mirror talking to myself and searching my face for signs of a madman, but I could see none.

Searching my face for signs of a madman. Such an extravagance would be in keeping with, say, Salvador Dali. Great artist. Great eccentric. Great line. But no, it comes courtesy of Patrick Byrne — a lowercase individual. There are plenty more like that too. **Lustmord** is fuelled by obsessives who are out of control, trying desperately to grab the handrail of life before they fall off the ride.

I cannot get the smell of her decaying body out of my system. I will surrender tonite. I did not interfere with her.

[Derrick Edwardson]

[William Edward] Hickman was later asked by police why he dismembered her body; he replied that he needed to fit her into his suitcase to get her into his car unwitnessed. When asked why he didn't just buy a bigger suitcase, Hickman stared at his interrogators with a puzzled expression.

I am the man that goes
around the world doing
people good.
My moto is.
Rob em, Fuck em and then
Kill em.
Thats me
Carl Panzram.

For heavens
sake catch me
Before I kill more
I cannot control myself.

[William Heirens]

A brief introduction is made by King of each case and criminal, followed by examples of that subject's artistic achievements. The downside is that for every raw truth, lucid inner exposed and touch of literary genius, some other joker, once incarcerated, gets started on poetry. 'odd man at the trial / odd man all the while. / what journalist's eye / could write my fearful fright?' Oops. Next. But don't be put off. **Lustmord** is a mighty hefty read that doesn't fail to deliver on a regular basis. Even the more familiar headcases are represented by work which I don't recall ever having seen before. Several long letters by Albert Fish to various women courtesy of classified ad columns, for instance. Three violent sex stories found in a trunk belonging to G.J. Schaefer Jr. Excerpts from Issel Sagawa's 'fictionalised' autobiography, detailing how he was smitten by a young Dutch student, got her to come round to his flat on the pretext of wanting to record her



reciting a German expressionist poem (hey, fellas, give that line a try down at the Roxy!), killed her and ate her. 'The wonderful taste cheers me up and I devour her underarm up to the elbow.' Fascinating and original, worth getting if only for 'The Case of the Disembowelled Doll' and the lurid sculptures created by 'Mr Brown'. He killed his family you know.

GBH: LIVE IN LOS ANGELES 1988

d: Karen Benthall (1989)
[Visionary]

The Celebrity Theatre, Anaheim. A milestone in GBH's career if only for sheer Bouncer presence. Readers may recall the spiky anthem of 'City Baby Attacked By Rats', something of a hit for GBH back in... whenever. Here, in November 1988, the band are captured promoting their forthcoming album, **A Fridge Too Far**, with edited highlights from two nights in front of an excitable Anaheim crowd. The music is frenetic as can be expected — Punk-cum-Thrash Metal — with the camerawork being better than average for this type of thing. i.e. the camera moves and there's more than one of them. A couple of numbers into the gig on the Friday night, the bouncers come out in force trying to cope with all the stage diving taking place. Pretty soon there is a wall of thick-set fellas on the stage itself, obscuring the band. All the audience can see are a line of 'VIP Services' security T-shirts and the occasional guitar and mic stand jutting between the legs and elbows. Who hired these men to bounce? It certainly can't be their *real* job. VIP Services seem to be in some bemusement as to what it is the four guys behind them are up to; the noise being a minor irritation in their clobbering of anyone who attempts to make a dash for the stage area. Up a fresh face will pop and — SLAM! 600lbs of VIP fat later — down it goes again head first. Thirty minutes into this video, somewhat belatedly, the wisecrack "Spot the band!" flashes across the screen. The Saturday night gig fares even less well. After initial trouble trying to get into the venue, the camera crew have to focus on a bigger and uglier set of security blobs on stage. (One of whom looks like a 'Pugsley'.) Apparently, on this second night, Anaheim police stopped

Video

the show after a member of the audience was injured, allowing it to continue when the crowd look set to become hostile. But there's none of that on this video... the thing goes from one bloody number to the next, relentlessly. Whether a fan or not, this GBH live show makes for pretty funny viewing.



FIST OF THE NORTH STAR

d: Tony Randel (1995)
[Medusa]

It's getting to be quite a formidable task trying to keep a track of Clint Howard and his myriad screen appearances. Something of a contemporary John Carradine, popping up in everything from exploitation pictures like **Ticks** to the award winning blockbuster, **Apollo 13** (nothing to do with the fact that his brother Ron directed it...), Clint inevitably plays demented bit-part characters, mussing up what little hair he has to help visually enhance his low-IQ post. In **Fist of the North Star** he plays a wild man.

Fist of the North Star. Post-apocalyptic future, Good vs. Evil, brother against brother. To go for a live-action take on the popular manga hero was, presumably, a boardroom brainwave. Let's consider for a moment the artistic seed from whence this movie might have come: **Man In Big Hat** — "Hey, we'll make a fuckin' packet selling this shit back to the gooks!" There's no getting round it, **Fist...** sucks major league

(or blows, depending at which end you're at). It's not good. It's not good-bad. It's not bad-good. It's sheer unadulterated drivel with a distinct lack of Entertainment to go on top. Other than Clint — who, incidentally, attacks every role he's given like it might be his last — the rest of the cast includes Chris Penn, Melvin Van Peebles, Malcolm McDowell (who must have wasted all of five minutes rehearsing his lines), and kickboxing champion Gary Daniels as Kenshiro the hero (who evidently laboured months over his). A couple of bloody effects and a heavy fight finale has landed this with an 18 certificate. Let's hope that kills the bugger dead.



PRESCRIPTION FOR MURDER

d: Catherine Cyran (1995)
(Medusa)

Clint Howard fans! He's here, being interviewed by police for all of 10 seconds!...

A bunch of dead bodies are turning up around town, and, as the victims have all been subject to crude medical experiments before being dumped, Detective Burt Miller (Adam Baldwin) correctly deduces that the murderer is some kind of failed surgical nut. Willy Knapp (Don Harvey) is the culprit, unsuccessfully trying to follow in his tyrannical father's footsteps. Conveniently, Knapp senior has left his son a grand house and the wealth to pretty much do what he pleases — i.e. not work for a living and instead build a makeshift operating theatre in the cellar. To give the story something else to do, Jenny (Nina Siemaszko) has reserva-

tions about her med. student boyfriend, and Barbara Carrera is a bitchy boss. **Prescription For Murder** might be pure hokum, but Harvey's mad doctor manner is a showstopper, babbling as he does to non-existent assistants and diagnosing fatuous maladies. What's more, he doesn't anaesthetise his victims — whom he abducts off the streets — prior to operating, but administers a muscle relaxant instead so that they can see everything that goes on, powerless to do anything about it. When Knapp runs out of the relaxant drug, he simply *superglues* his patients down and operates! [*"Apply your own NHS gag here."*] Knapp is a woman with a perfect hourglass figure that, yes, "I think we can save the baby..." To a healthy, conscious man he administers electrical resuscitation procedures, and to another, he removes vital internal organs. It goes without saying that the movie's psycho-premise is disconcerting and will undoubtedly be a strain on anyone with even the merest medical foreboding, but **Prescription for Murder** is a welcome piece of sickness nonetheless. The gore effects are of the real cheap *real animal organ* variety, the dialogue is banal in a banal kind of way, and there are whole chunks of stale attempts at humour, but any picture in which liposuction is the key element of the 'thrilling' finale must be doing something right! Barbara Carrera finds herself in the Knapp OR for some 'emergency' liposuction on her buttocks. Without the proper facilities, Knapp utilises a household vacuum cleaner, except the bag bursts and fatty tissue sprays everywhere... Coerced into liposuction. Could only be a woman director.

THE ISLAND OF LOST SOULS

d: Eric C. Kenton (1933)
(Visionary)

The *Island Of Lost Souls*, loosely based on HG Wells' *The Island Of Doctor Moreau*, is one of those Thirties horror films that stands miles above the low level cack which characterises the genre then and now. Charles Laughton is a disturbing and unperturbable Moreau, presiding with English insouciance over his island paradise in hell. When a stranger arrives Moreau seizes on the chance to take his genetic experiments that one step further — with pre-

dictably catastrophic results.

The imagery is genuinely disturbing. Moreau's victims look like extras from Nazi propaganda films on sub-human intermench, and Moreau himself wanders his domain dressed in colonialist white suit, black tie and bull whip to hand. It's easy to see why the film fell foul of the British censors. The images of Moreau presiding over his 'natives', was perhaps considered too close for comfort. The fact that the Imperial Moreau is so demonically possessed probably didn't help.

The dark thread of sexuality that runs through the film provided yet another reason for the film to be banned. There is only one female on Moreau's island, a beautiful, revealingly dressed and overtly sexual character who makes no secret of her desire for the newly arrived stranger.

But to see this film as a simple allegory on the evils of Western colonialism is to miss the deeper subtext. Moreau's genetic experiments restate the question of nature versus nurture. When Moreau cries that "the stubborn beast flesh cries back" he despairs that nature prevails despite all. And yet his woman weeps, giving hope that perhaps nature is not totally triumphant. With Nazi atrocities in the name of race still to come, and intellectual interest in eugenics at its height, this timely film asked awkward questions that were easily ignored. No wonder HG Wells objected to the film — didn't he have a penchant for eugenics at the time? [PP]

KEROUAC

A film by John Antonelli
(Visionary)

Here is a documentary on the life of that most famous Beat author, Jack Kerouac, utilising archive film, interview footage and reconstructions with actors, to tell its story. Seventy-three minutes of tortured artist growing up, becoming famous, turning alcoholic, bulging out, and dying young(-ish). After the final closing credit has rolled by, will you, like me, ponder for a moment and rewind to the beginning to check out the opening clip? A snippet from *The Steve Allen Show*? it was either an act of pure genius on director Antonelli's part to have this as his 'introduction' to Kerouac, or one of pure stupidity. I can't decide. Steve Allen interviews Jack from behind a piano, tickling the ivories at random in a free-form jazz fashion.

Mid-conversation, mid-sentence, while *speaking*, Steve knocks out a non-tune, throws in a discord. If Beat authors and Beat literature didn't already conjure up visions of Walter Paisley and smoky coffee-houses, they will after this. *Beat writing — that's Steve and Jack at the piano isn't it?* Unfortunately, the documentary that unfolds following this opening is a pretty drab affair. Sure, the interviews with the likes of Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs and Herbert Huncke are interesting enough, so too the old clips, but the reconstructions and readings — which take up a substantial part of the running time — are dire in a big way. An actor plays the part of Kerouac, trundling about mountaintops and beaches, accompanied by a voice-over reading excerpts from the man's works. In the manner of an excitable drama student attempting to inject *meaning* to every syllable, but void of any real passion, Jack's prose comes over with all the dynamism of granny's purple hair rinse. **On the Road with John and Jane**, perhaps? **Maggie Cassidy, OAP... The Town and The City when Everyone's Gone to Bed...** Good grief. When Kerouac himself actually gets to recite (in the Steve Allen clip), it's not like he's auditioning for **A Book At Bedtime**, it's with a subtle vitality. Can't the filmmakers see that? Jack Kerouac was a writer who got fat. With Antonelli's film as your guide, you'll believe that's as far as it gets.

MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM

d: Michael Curtiz, 1933
[Visionary]

Sculptor Henry Jarrod has a wax museum down a side street in old London town (circa 1921). Though the wax figures are beautifully rendered, paying customers aren't exactly flocking to the place. Jarrod's financier tries to convince the sculptor he ought to create more *exciting* scenes, not images of Voltaire and Marie Antoinette and the like. (Most of the museum pieces are figures from French history, pretty oblique eh?) Jarrod will have none of it, and so his business associate determines that the only way to save his investment, is to burn the museum down and claim on the insurance. In the ensuing scuffle Jarrod is knocked to the ground and left for dead in the flames.

More than a decade later, having survived the fire, Jarrod relocates to New York and opens a fresh museum. He is confined to a wheelchair and unable to work with his hands, but an accomplice seems adept at recreating all the pieces from the earlier museum, just as exquisitely. Which is surprising, as the accomplice looks nothing more than a ham-fisted dolt. Here comes the mystery... The wax models aren't exactly *wax*. They're flesh and bone people, dead, and *covered* in wax. Furthermore, Jarrod isn't the wheelchair-bound cripple he makes out to be. Instead, beneath his mask, he's a grotesque monster, disfigured by the fire and driven insane.

Michael Curtiz' film spawned several remakes, one of which was in 3D and starred Vincent Price; another was the spoof, **Carry On Screaming**. This is probably the best (**Mystery...**, not **Carry on Screaming**), with its shot of German Expressionism, closeted atmosphere and early two-colour Technicolor process. (So washed-out, it looks almost like B/W anyway.) And, as the bulk of the thing is set in New York, 1933, it's also supposed to be the first horror film to use a contemporary urban setting. Fay Wray plays a reporter with a voice so shrill that it's quite impossible to make out what she's saying much of the time. She's go-getting, hard-hitting, a darling of the boys in blue, and annoying as fuck. Lionel Atwill turns in one of his customary *mad* characters, as the sculptor Jarrod, in monster make-up

effective even today. The sequence in which Atwill unknowingly corners Wray in a basement, creeping closer to the camera, still manages to raise a chill. Another sequence of note is that featuring a wax figure display. This superfluous shot, appearing to be nothing more than a poke in the eye of the censors of the day, has a mechanical wax figure raise and then sink a knife deeply — and in extreme close-up — into the 'flesh' of a second wax figure. Naturally, if these were 'real life' characters in a 'real life' situation, there wouldn't be a cat in hell's chance of the shot getting through intact...

Of course, inconsistencies abound — for instance, why should Jarrod be such a success in America with an exhibition that was dull 10 years previously? And the less said about Fay Wray's 'hard-nosed, good kid, comic-relief' bit the better. But if you like your horror with a *noir* quality — albeit two-colour tinted — and genuinely mean-looking criminal underworld-types, **Mystery of the Wax Museum** throws enough grit into the works to make it worth your while.

ANOTHER GIRL ANOTHER PLANET

d: Michael Almereyda (1992)
[Screen Edge, 28/30 The Square, St Annes on Sea, FYB 1RF]

A certain notoriety precedes this film. Indeed, this is the one filmed entirely on a Fischer-Price PXL 2000 'toy' camera. Don't come along expecting a revolution in entertainment, though — Almereyda has done an admirable job in making a coherent picture out of the blurry PXL 2000 images, but after **Another Girl Another Planet** not another second of PXL 2000 will you want to see. Yes, the film's an interesting exercise all right and there's some sharp dialogue to be had, but visually it's a pitched battle with your cataracts. Before the 50-plus minutes have rolled by, it becomes necessary to switch off the sense of sight and simply *listen*. The story concerns a bunch of East Village neighbours and their John Cassavetes kind of relationships: strange bedfellows, adulthood, husband and wives... One particular line of conversation had me laughing out loud: Finley tells the guys how her husband died of cancer. He was a Buddhist and it so happened that a lama was in the hospital at the time of his dying. He sat



with the guy, comforting him. It's a known fact, apparently, that when dead, the various senses shut down not together, but in stages. The brain can pick up sounds half an hour after officially being pronounced dead. To this end, Finley relates how the last words her husband heard were the lama screaming, 'ANDREW — YOU'RE DEAD NOW!'

CRIMINAL

d: David Jacobson (1994)
[Screen Edge, 28/30 The Square, St Annes on Sea, FY8 1RF]

Gus Bender — he's a worried man. He's broke, but his moaning wife insists on moving house; a nice little suburban district where it's relatively safe for their son to grow up. (She accuses Gus in advance for any physical catastrophe that might befall the tyke if they *don't* move.) When \$100,000 falls into Gus' lap at work, he steals the money and puts it down on the dream house. But then he finds his wife is having an affair, his boss discovers that a lot of his money is missing, and Gus, well, Gus heads off out of town. On the road he meets Gina, a motel worker, finds a little happiness and together they make plans to escape to Canada.

Things go wrong, of course...

Criminal isn't altogether strong on plot, but it's gorgeous to look at. Actually, there's a lot more to it than that. It's a movie that lingers in the memory long after the final credits roll. Part of this is down to the B/W photography by Wolfgang Held, evoking images of **The Honeymoon Killers**, **Eraserhead**, **Detour** and even Guy Maddin with it's eerie, occasionally off-beat *noir* starkness. At times the dialogue does get a little self-conscious — as in the doorman who apologises repeatedly for having bumped Guy's car some weeks back — but the (presumably) non-actors do a great job in general. Any movie with so much misery wins points in my book. Gus heads off to Niagara Falls. Gets there. Heads back home. En route, someone dies. *Miserable*. It's a USA/German co-production, too, but I'd like to know what input came from the American side of the deal — there's absolutely nothing in this movie beyond several exterior shots that doesn't scream 'straight from the heart of Europe'. Even the dollar bills are handled with all the familiarity of artefacts from another

world. It's a shame that **Criminal** will probably get lost between pig-dog holes: it's perhaps too conventional to make it as a cult movie and it's certainly not mainstream. Not one nor the other. However, take a look and enrich your life — this is a very fine piece of work indeed.

CAMPUS MADNESS / SOUTHERN DEPRESSION

d: Matthew Samuel Smith (1996)
[NTSC only. \$19.95 each. M.S.S. Film & Video, 405 W College Ave., Apt 407, Tallahassee FL 32301-1437, USA]

Dale, a big guy, knocks on Johnny's door and demands money. He wants what's owing him and threatens to beat Johnny if he doesn't come up with it soon. Those readers who recall the interview with Matthew Smith back in **Headpress 11** will know that the Florida-based director is responsible for some seriously under-budget work. What's more, he doesn't seem to care an iota about standard film practices, such as editing and continuity. Well, whatever he's been tooting on lately, the result —

Campus Madness — is one of the strangest viewing experiences since Méliès landed on the moon. Absolutely no exaggeration. The underlying theme is that of Dale chasing his drug money (all \$20 of it!). But many other people just happen along, and the film slips into one of those fly-on-the-wall documentary affairs. Then the plot again. But there's absolutely no way of knowing which bit is which. At one point, Johnny climbs in through an apartment window and the guy there is seriously pissed that he has done so (believe me, we're not talking acting ability here). Guys sit around smoking a lot of dope and puking, playing with musical instruments. Whenever Dale beats Johnny up they revert back to buddies and suggest they go chick hunting. The cafeteria scene is a good example of this film's surreal qualities: Dale and Johnny sit mouthing off how bad they

are, while conversation from other tables almost drowns them out. A friend of theirs walks in — literally; they're as surprised to see her as she is the camera — and she goes back to an apartment with them and dances while drinking beer. (Cue lots of shots of the girl's ass in white cotton underwear. Lots of shots.) Another day, the girl comes back and dances some more. Johnny makes passes at girls and they turn him down. The film ends... eventually.

Next up, **Southern Depression**.

This one includes full-frontal nudity and has a shot at holding onto a plot, but the technical incompetence is such that the picture is blurred and dark, and the sound cuts out on a regular basis. Indeed, the camera appears to be *broken*. The — deep breath — story centres around a vampire bitch who wears a lot of sexy lingerie. She captures two guys and keeps them in a lock-up. "You know what you're here for?" she says to the first guy. "No, why?" he replies. A professor is involved — but I'd guess only so that the old fool playing him can get into a hot tub with a young, naked vampire bitch.

THE INVISIBLE KINGDOM: REVEALED

d: Various
[Essa, ???]

Here is a collection of films which made up part of the Transgressive/Nick Zedd touring programme earlier this year. None of the Zedd productions are actually represented here (who said 'hooray?'), and what we've got instead are David Wojnarowicz & Tommy Turner's **Where Evil Dwells** (overlong mess of sequences — one of which has Joe Coleman biting the heads off of live mice — and suppos-



edly loosely based on the case of Satan-looser Ricky Kasso), Richard Kern's **The Bitches** (a very erotic effort which... er... says something about gender swapping and men as women and vice versa — while fucking), Tessa Hughes Freeland's **Nymphomania** (a nymph dances through the woods before getting raped to death by a big-dicked Pan), Jerri Cain Rossi's **Black Hearts Bleed Red** (Joe Coleman on a gun-totin' rampage), and Cassandra Stark Melé's recently re-edited **Wrecked On Cannibal Island** (domestic crisis, following which Ms Stark runs out onto the streets and yells to everyone, "leave us alone!"). Extremely low-budget and raw, on the whole **Invisible Kingdom: Revealed** is a recommended insight into Transgressives less common. A drawback is that the contact address, Essa, courtesy of J&B distribution, as noted in the article elsewhere this issue, is no longer valid. Ask the baby Jesus for assistance.

WICKED WAYS / STARTING OVER

[£25 *Your Choice of Amsterdam*, Postbus 2138, 1000 CC, Amsterdam, Holland. Phone 00 31 20 620 4209]

Subtitled 'Education of a DP Virgin' **Wicked Ways** is something other than the usual fucking-by-numbers Yank Wank video. Sure, the staple diet of American hard-core is here in all its glory: perfect blond bodies, butt fucking galore, strap-on cocks for those girl-on-girl encounters. What's different is the first 20 minutes when we get Kimberly Kylie all on her own, talking dirty to camera while she fucks herself senseless. Talking dirty doesn't convey the tone — this an almost vicious monologue that she mutters to herself more than to you as she uses not one but two thick dildos to fuck herself in the cunt. And when she uses a vibrating love ball in her pussy you don't blink when she pulls it out of herself and stuffs it in her mouth — no, you don't blink when she repeats the trick by pulling one out of her snatch and another out of her asshole and then greedily pops them both in her mouth to suck on.

When the scene switches to her with a blow-up doll you know you're in strange territory. "You like it up the ass you little whore" she hisses in the dark undertone and then proceeds to fuck it hard with a strap-on

cock. She fucks it every way she can and then forces a thick plastic cock into its ever-open mouth so that it can fuck her back. Ironic post-modern comment on the objectification of bodies in hard-core? A clever play on the interchangeable-ity of performers in porn? Grab a theory, this is performance smut except that there's none of that self-conscious smartiness that makes artiness. This is hard-core that disturbs even as the blood flows into the places that mark out the power difference between you as voyeur and her as performer.

It's just a shame that the rest of the video, and the other film on this double feature, is standard US hard-core fare. [PP]

BODY PUZZLE

d: **Lamberto Bava** (1992)
[*A Taste of Fear*]

Giallo has never been the hardest of film genres. Plot inconsistencies are almost *de rigueur*, allowing the story to accommodate its frequent and inevitable gory set-pieces. Two decades ago, silly twists and inconsistencies rarely mattered with masters such as Argento and Fulci at the helm. There was something volatile at work; an energy that positively engulfed the viewer. Time moves on, however, and things change. Argento has proven in his less than satisfying recent outings that something more is required of giallo, and that there is a mighty fine line between bravado and embarrassment. Maybe the giallo was of an era, not successfully able to transpose to true crime-sodden times such as these. For the most part, the giallo and Italian exploitation in general has been swallowed by Eastern directors whose ultra-violent shoot-'em-ups and off-kilter ideology has created a whole new fan base.

That said, it's with natural trepidation that we move on to **Body Puzzle**, the new giallo from Lamberto Bava. The story concerns a rash of murders with each victim discovered having some part of their anatomy missing. In a nearby cemetery, Tracy Grant (Joanna Pacula) discovers that the remains of her recently deceased husband, Abe, have been stolen. Well, there is a link: Abe had several organs donated posthumously and now someone wants to piece him and them back together. Why is never made

very clear, though it possibly has something to do with Abe's secret life and gay lovers. (The pre-credit sequence has a motorcyclist driving too fast and falling off his bike — symbolism of a particularly meaningless nature, perhaps?) Whatever, Abe must have been a monument to physical excellence, for his donations include one ear, a hand, two corneas, and — wait for it — his penis. The killer procures the latter in a swimming bath, an especially disjointed and confusing sequence which comes over as a kind of Freudian homage to Kevin Costner in **Waterworld**. Another murder — and let's face it, that's what we're here for — takes place in a classroom full of blind children. While the kids are listening to a tape of **Peter And The Wolf**, the teacher has her throat cut and eyes removed. But perhaps the most distasteful of the lot, and the only truly effective moment of tension in the whole movie, occurs in a public lavatory where a woman seated on the bowl is attacked with an axe.

As stated, this type of horror thriller effectively ceased to be a force worth reckoning with several years ago. **Body Puzzle** is an attempt to revive the genre by a director who himself has not been wholly successful in shaking former glories (notably his father's). The genre is too derivative and the direction too unexceptional to make a case for Bava Jr either way. The pacing is akin to a National Lampoon vacation movie, with the whole thing being capped by an excruciatingly shoddy climax. More than ever we need those gory set-pieces.

While **Body Puzzle** is unlikely to win the genre any new fans, Italian film aficionados will delight in seeing 'John Morghen' strut his funky hairlines once again.

NOTHING BUT ENEMIES

d: **Anton Black** (1994)

Came a note with this review tape. 'I think you should, initially at least, look with favour upon [Nothing But Enemies] as I have been good enough to record it on a high quality three-hour tape, thus allowing you to record a whole two films on it after you've watched it. I could have got an E30, you know.' This film, apparently, isn't for sale. Just for review. Actually, there are several short films on the tape, of which **Nothing But Enemies** isn't

audio

the best. The tape commences with a title-less piece in which a whispering woman reminds herself of human frailty. Next up is **Nothing But Enemies**. Angst-ridden femme in bathrobe has scrawling mishap with lipstick. She daubs the stuff on the walls before falling over with a sigh. Pictures of crucifixion and face-tearing accompanies her doleful state. The film ends with some raw meat-play and snatches of the **Suspria** soundtrack. The next short — at a guess, **White Walls** — is a home-made music promo for Alternative TV's 'White Walls'. (It has a twist in the tail, but so do most MTV links.) The best piece on the tape is **Lashed** and is possibly titled **In Framed**. The filmmakers attempt to interview a couple of girls but ineptitude and the mechanics of filming get in the way. The clapperboard is in shot more than the subject, the film plays upside down and with scratches, the subject gives nonsensical answers to questions we cannot hear... and the best line in the compilation takes place: Disembodied voice #1: "The sound is rolling." Disembodied voice #2: "Well I don't fuckin' want it to be." Needless to say, the promise of a three-hour video cassette doesn't buy much of a good review.

HATESVILLE

The Boyd Rice Experience
[CD, 40 mins. \$10 plus age statement. Goad To Hell Enterprises, PO Box 31009, Portland, Oregon 97231, USA]

☛ Women are only good for fucking and beating."

And so begins Jim Goad's relentless attack on the fairer sex. With a pounding boot to face beat, cop car sirens and painful female screams, 'Let's Hear It For Violence Towards Women' is not only the most offensive track on this compilation of hate and loathing, chances are it's the most offensive thing you have EVER heard! Our man Jim loves to smash women into door-frames, bust open their lips, shred their love letters, crack their ribs, smash their teeth on white porcelain sinks... Why? Because women ask for it! They talk too much and so provoke such violence.

Other tracks on this spoken word CD by Adam Parfrey, Shaun Par-

tridge and Boyd Rice all follow the same logic: hate is groovy. This CD gives you the opportunity to wallow in the maltreatment of others, generally women, other races and sometimes children. These self-styled 'Beats of Hatred' have a message to tell. Don't let assholes get in your way, revenge is sweet, women are objects and the most essential part of a little girl is her vagina!

Musically, the content is minimal except for the very odd little track called 'What If They Gave A Love In...' by Adam Parfrey who does the best Barry White Impersonation I have ever heard!

On the whole, it takes some getting used to, and those not familiar with Jim Goad's literary work are in for a shock. But for those already over the edge, **Hatesville** is the perfect vacation resort. Savage enough to make you squirm yet scrumptious enough to leave you scrambling for more! [DG]

GS I LOVE YOU: JAPANESE GARAGE BANDS OF THE 1960S

Various Artists
[CD, Big Beat]

☛ "Shevidevi I need you, oiwight man!"

Here's a wonderful platter for all fans of serious guitar fuzz and pidgin English. Twenty-eight tracks of late-Sixties dementia and a great signpost in the evolution of Japanese noise. Dedicated purveyors of US teen beat will find themselves in uncharted territory here, with a whole new generation of musical hard-ons Imitating the Western sound. In the best Sixties Punk tradition, these Japs go hell for leather, interpreting the cool sounds of the day with their own unchecked testosterone enthusiasm. Naturally, being Japanese, the whole thing is imbued with an element of 'wrongness' — as if whole passages have been lost in the translation and the groups have stuck in whatever's at hand to make up the difference. Despite inroads into psychedelia over in the States, the Jap bands of the late-Sixties (on this compilation at least) are still essentially producing Beat music, though not in a traditional sense. According to the (very good) sleeve notes for **GS I Love You** (GS being 'Group Sounds'), this would be down to the fact that home-grown

Rock 'n' Roll music in Japan didn't really exist prior to the 1960s. As a consequence, the country was a couple of years behind the West. No matter. They tended to throw off shackles rather quickly: The Swing West formed in 1957 originally as a Country & Western outfit. In 1969 — a year before they disbanded — they released the album **Swing West On Stage** (not a live thing), which included the absolutely spastic 'Fire', a cover of The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown number (see note). Only a year before, they were doing swing-a-long, melodically pleasing numbers like 'Kokoro No Tokimeki (Ajoen Ajoen)' (albeit with a fuzz guitar from a different planet). These groups were morphing with every fad that came along, incorporating into the mix their own idea of technologically advanced instruments (such as the wah-wah pedal...). 'Fire' must have been great in The Swing West's live set; listening to it in the cold light of day, however, it's not a little ridiculous with its clumsy delivery and gobbledegook lyric — *real* gobbledegook, the singer is reciting the words of the original *phonetically*.

There is an abundance of excellent material on **GS I Love You**. Inevitably, a couple of dogs, too. 'Jane Jane' by Miki Obata & The Out Cast closes the album and, with its female vocal, only borderline Garage. Potential for more Jap sounds to be mined? Let's hope so!

NOTE Apparently, Arthur Brown, in concert, would wear a specially designed helmet for his 'Fire' number. After delivering the opening line "I am the god of hell-fire, and I bring you...", a guy behind the scenes would turn on a gas tap or something and, as Arthur screamed "FIRE!", flames would shoot forth from his helmeted head. (That's safe, isn't it.) One time a technical hitch saw that Arthur delivered his line as normal, but the spectacular fire-show didn't occur. "I am the god of hell-fire," Arthur shouted, as was customary, "and I bring you... FIRE!" Came a voice from the back: "No you don't. I can't get the bloody tap on."

UNTIL THE EAGLE GRINS

The Crownhate Ruin
[CD, Discord]

Reminiscent of Nirvana, which is bad, and Pearl Jam, which is worse, but only vaguely. Basically it's Rock, the singer can't sing, and if I said "startling originality" was the

first phrase to spring to mind when I listened to it, I'd be, er, lying. [SW]

SCRATCH OR STITCH

Meit Banana
[CD, Skin Graft]

Someone's kid sister shrieking over middlingly frantic guitars and drums. OK, it might prove to be a grower and it does come from Japan, but, y'know, I sometimes get the feeling people turn to the comfortable fig-leaf of "noise" because it's a convenient way of papering over the cracks left by the run-away gridlock of an overflowing creative vacuum. Atavistically speaking, y'understand. [SW]

RECUERDA

Dazzling Killmen
[CD, Skin Graft/distributed in UK by Southern Studios]

DISCIPLINE THROUGH SOUND

Big'n
[CD, Gasoline Boost/distributed in UK by Southern Studios]

I got stopped by the cops one night. They asked me to step out of the car — a beat-up Cortina — and the lady officer told me I had faulty brake lights. She was nice in a PR kind of way. Her fellow officer was shining a torch into the back of the Cortina and making his way around it, checking it out. On the passenger seat was a heavy duty chain with which I would padlock the steering wheel to the accelerator pedal. It didn't stop anyone siphoning off the petrol (a pretty easy thing to do on that make of vehicle), but the car never got stolen. The officer with the light said nothing about the length of chain, but asked, instead, "Where's

your Beatbox?" Beatbox? I wondered. Is that like Road Tax? No, Beatbox, as in cassette player or radio. If I'd known back then what I know now I would have replied, "I don't have a 'beatbox' because that way I can't listen to Dazzling Killmen or Big'n."

Dazzling Killmen were big cheeses on the progressive noise circuit. The *Recuerda* album compiles their singles and rare recordings.

Big'n is Sonic Youth without Kim Gordon. *Discipline Through Sound* is a good title, and if you want to know how far in the clouds most musicians have their heads, listen to the last track on this album. It's a phone conversation set to music, in which a member of the band is describing how work on the album is progressing. While it might be comforting to think that the album you're involved with is going to be the best in the world, let's get real and cut the crap about using six different drum kits. No one will notice and no one listening will fucking care if snare A, drum kit 5 on track two goes 'bink' or fucking 'bonk'. Bah. Drums — they're only there to enable the musicians to keep time.

SONGS OF A DEAD DREAMER

DJ Spooky
[ZLP, Asphodel, PO Box 51,
Chelsea Station, New York, NY
10113, USA]

Hot on the heels of his compilation CD for Knitting Factory, *Necropolis: The Dialogic Project*, arrives DJ Spooky's highly anticipated (at least around here, bub!) debut album.

Transcending the parameters of much of today's music that purports to be, uh, *experimental*, New York's DJ Spooky fucks with turntables to the point of creating a colossal tapestry of instrumental sound that successfully prescribes avant-garde aesthetics to a molten trance/trip-hop environment.

Utilising loops, treatments, a couple of guest musicians (including

Arto Lindsay) and some liberal helpings of additional bass, an absolutely astonishing metamorphic collage is built to pull your mind inside out. Pleasantly informed by a range of cited influences from Stockhausen to the Italian Futurists, DJ Spooky's music cruises barely charted highways to some kind of sonic utopia which seems to embrace almost every form of modern music without being readily suffocated by categorisation or even tangibility.

Rich, organic and rife with an infinite wealth of possibilities, *Songs Of A Dead Dreamer* casts new light onto several decades of sound exploration. Unbelievably, the mid-Nineties may well have thrown something up to rival, say, *The Velvet Underground & Nico* or *Fear Of A Black Planet*. In every respect, this is a stunning album that works on every conceivable level. Words almost fail me. [R]

FILTHY LUCRE LIVE

Sex Pistols
[CD, Virgin]

Barely has the dust settled on the last scaffold down and out pops this document of the recent Sex Pistols' Finsbury Park reunion gig. How many marketing man-hours did it take to come up with the smug anarcho title of *Filthy Lucre Live*. I wonder? Sex Pistols reunion gig — whether or not you believe that to be a double negative, and this whole reformation malarkey a sham, here, unquestionably, is a rocking good album. Rocking as in the Rolling Stones might Rock were they any good. Rocking in a way that the original singles and Pistols album tracks didn't. It's like someone has dropped the Pistols into a super-charger and they've somehow survived and come out note-perfect. Not that the edge has gone — a track like 'Bodies', the killer-opener here, couldn't be done without some piss-in-your-eye antagonism — it's just polished in a way suggesting this is how the band might have been had they lost the influence of McLaren early on, and never taken on board the joke that was Sid Vicious. Personally, I don't think Lydon has sounded better but it's not easy to admit to that after having heard his embarrassing mid-song banter on how 'unloved' the Pistols are. (It's more of an *appeal* to be unloved: if the critics didn't like you, you wouldn't get a review in the *Daily Express*.) Like punk never



happened? Oh it happened, all right. Here's the evidence. Here's the water on the sparks of 'what it all meant' — passion and anger motivated now by business acumen and nostalgia. And the original punk generation? They're the folks who take their kids to see Sex Pistols reunion gigs. This is a damn fine album for sure, but one which we all could have done without.

GRAVITATIONAL PULL VS. THE DESIRE FOR AN AQUATIC LIFE

Stars Of The Lid
[LP, Sedimental, PO Box 4144,
Austin, TX 78765, USA]

Second album from this quietly celebrated Texan outfit whose tempered Rock treatments do precious little to betray the fact they own Main records. Despite this, I must admit the four cuts here swell and contract to a largely satisfying effect; navigating the same sonic mulch both Pink Floyd have employed on many a laborious Intro and newer composers such as Thomas Koner have made a career from. It all blends into the wallpaper quite nicely, with only what sounds like some subtle guitar harmonics and inconspicuous rumbling creeping out to send some ripples through your coffee, but I'm still left wondering how much of this shit does anybody honestly need?

The combination of their being American and the industry's ridiculously incessant and insane clambering for anything remotely pushing 'rock' towards 'ambient' at the moment, of course, serves them well. However, time will reveal whether *Stars Of The Lid*, and countless others of their ilk, are truly remarkable examples of where today's guitar-orientated outfit is 'at', or whether they're destined to go much the same way as my Jesus Lizard collection... [R]

CHICKS HATE WES

Sweat Pea
[CD, Trance Syndicate]

Heavily reliant on the ambience created by guitar amps turned up too loud, Sweat Pea's is a sound in search of a style. That isn't to say the band's debut, *Chicks Hate Wes*, is bad. But distortion of this sort has been done to death already (sounds like Sonic Youth). What's more, it's a fact that the band themselves appear to come to terms with, when, two-thirds of the way into the album, they switch off the noise for a sing-song.

QUEASY

Megatory
[Cassette, UK £5.50 / Rest £7
payable: A. Murphy, c/o 64 Bandywood Road, Kingstanding, Birmingham, B44 9LT]

Interesting collages of audio clips and random transmissions, pinned down by some ingratiating 'tunes'. It's actually a move of initiative to keep the soundbites in some kind of order, using them to give extra depth to the compositions, rather than dropping them in as mere filler. Listening to Megatory's *Queasy* is not unlike catching messages on a dream radio station; the rhythms (vocal-free) are across the board — slightly jazz, slightly techno, slightly adult film soundtrack, all a little detuned for that extra sensation of nausea in the pit of your stomach. Imagine Negativland's 'The Perfect Cut' but without the nod and a wink and you're part way there. **NOTE** Megatory are seeking to contact 'like-minded operations, with a view to collaboration, commissions and performance'. Interested parties should write to the address above.



LOVE LOVELY, LOVE

Jonny Polonsky
[CD single, Revolution]

You're gonna have to sit down for this, it's one of them new fangled Easy Listening retro endeavours. A picture of Jonny on the sleeve makes him out to be a spotty geek. Maybe he is. Maybe he isn't. Apparently, he recorded this junk on a four track machine in his brother's old bedroom. It's amazing what they can do nowadays. The soft soap version of Nirvana's 'In Bloom' might raise a smile, but so does Frank Sinatra and he's over 80 years old.

STANDING AT THE GATES OF TIME

The Creatures of the Golden Dawn
[CD, Collectables Records Inc, PO Box 35, Narberth, PA 19072, USA]

Here's a bunch a cuts recorded with the Creatures' original line-up back in 1986. No overdubs. None of that nonsense. Just pure, unadulterated, high-octane Garage. Influences shine through, and indeed the band claim that this is more of an archival interest than a reflection of their music now. A snippet from Shadows of Knight, half a verse from Thirteenth Floor Elevators, a chorus from the Chocolate Watch Band... It all adds to up to form a rock hard noise that somehow escapes being merely a Sixties rip-off. John Terlesky's great guitar work probably has a lot to do with that. His riffs are mesmerising. Yup, if songs about booze and two-timing chicks, drugs and fast cars aren't your bag, you're not going to find much pleasure in this collection. Everyone else: turn on, turn up and relive an era that you probably missed first time around. ■

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